

Urban First Nations Men Create a Ribbon Shirt

Thesis

presented at

Laurentian University

as a partial requirement

of the Master of Social Work Program

by

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Urban First Nations Men Create a Ribbon Shirt

November 3, 2018

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Laurentian University/Université Laurentienne
School of Graduate Studies/École des études supérieures

Title of Thesis **Urban First Nations Men Create a Ribbon Shirt**
Titre de la thèse

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Nom du candidat

Degree Master of Social Work
Diplôme

Department/Program Social Work Date of Approval November 3, 2018
Département/Programme Date de la soutenance

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Abstract

This thesis examines the experiences of three men, two First Nations and one Metis who participated in the creation of a Ribbon Shirt at the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre (SKHC) in Sudbury, Ontario. This research demonstrated how specific programming can nurture a connection to traditional ways in urban First Nations and Metis men and promote an embracing of First Nations identities. This study utilized both Phenomenology and elements of Photovoice research methodologies to gather participant narratives, this highlighted the lack of services specifically for men and the benefits of focused programming that included cultural teachings.

Keywords: Phenomenology, First Nations, Metis, Men, Photovoice, Ribbon Shirt.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my brothers Eric and Curtis who have been the best examples of good men.

I would also like to thank the men, Elders and helpers that participated with open hearts and provided a great deal of guidance and encouragement throughout my project. Thank you also to the Laurentian University and Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre families who provided direction, inspiration, and support far beyond their responsibilities.

Here I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Lea Tufford and Professor Susan Manitowabi who assisted me compiling this final thesis submission.

I also would like to acknowledge Dr. Cheryl Partridge and Dr. Emily Faries who have been inspirational examples of what it means to be an Elder, an Educator and a friend; who encouraged me in my academic studies and to work beyond even my own expectations.

A special thank you goes to the late Herb Nabigon who encouraged and supported me to take on this research. He passed away during this research process; he was such an immense influence in my academic life, and in my personal life to live a good life. He taught me to hold my head high when I was “called on to the carpet.”

I also would like to thank the strong women (Caralynn, Darcie, Kathy, Lara and Victoria to name a few) that surround me and encouraged me daily; with your love and humor you have kept me focused through this journey.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As a Social Worker over the past few years, I have struggling to find resources for some of the men that I have conducted counseling sessions with. Many men struggle to find resources to help support them on their wellness journey. This led me to ask the questions about the benefits of men accessing the limited resources that we have in this city. “What are the experiences of urban, First Nations and Metis men who participate in the making of a traditional Ribbon Shirt? What were the benefits of participating in this process? What impact has participating in this program had on their life? With these being the guiding questions, I followed three men through this project, and explored some of the issues that these men were facing in an urban setting.

Roles of Indigenous Men

Traditional roles of men were once a way of life: hunting, gathering, building, and being a protector of the family. Traditions and ceremonies guided a man on his path in life; he was born into a clan of which he was inextricably connected and was given a Spirit name and colours. In today’s society there are few opportunities to live in a traditional family setting. With the multitude of changes that society is evolving through, we can see the influences of intergenerational effects of residential schools and The Sixties Scoop. There is hope, as we hear the words and teachings of Elders as they their knowledge. Anderson (2012) quotes Thomas Porter (Sakokwenionkwas “The One Who Wins”), Elder, spokesperson and spiritual leader of the Mohawk community of Kanatshiohareke. Porter shares his knowledge about the traditional roles of First Nations men and highlights the deep-rooted belief of the responsibility in being a provider, protector and teacher:

Before [the men's] job was to carry the bones of ancestors ... That's a big responsibility. It involves teachings. It involves hunting, fishing, and it involves ceremonies of all kinds. It involves songs by the hundreds and hundreds. It involves where the stars and the constellations of stars are moving, and when and how it coordinates with what is growing and what's [available for] hunting and everything. And [we] have lost that connection (p. 270).

Morrisseau (1998) writes about a personal healing journey that encourages you to seek out healthy Elders to guide each person on this journey by illuminating the life work he would fulfill and the role he would play within the community. McGaa (1990) describes how young men were given sacred teachings and instructions that would guide them through the process of sacred ceremonies. "To learn traditional practices involves assisting one's Elders who have spent a lifetime conducting ceremony and of course practicing and walking the re road" (p.198). As an example, within the role of a Fire Keeper, a young man would learn how to participate as an assistant in the preparation and process of various ceremonies such as the sweat lodge, fasting, pipe ceremony, the first animal-hunting kill and funeral ceremony. Instructions and guidance were offered to men to ensure they were conducting and/or participating in ceremony in an authentic and safe way, for the self and all participants.

However, colonization played a pivotal role in the disintegration of traditional activities. Drumming, singing, rites, rituals, medicines, and sweats, fundamental to the identity of First Nations culture and community, were deemed 'sinful' in an effort to assimilate First Nations people into the dominant Euro-Centric culture and values (Hart, 2002). Currently, First Nations people in Canada continue to endure the residual impact of colonization and repercussions of national attempts at assimilation through the residential school system. The loss of language,

traditional roles and identity has left a legacy of trauma and loss of cultural teachings and ceremony. The widespread intergenerational trauma and suffering that First Nations people endure to date have left First Nations communities with a sense of disruption on emotional, physical, spiritual and mental levels. Such disruption of stability and synchronicity leaves little room for First Nations people to achieve balance and harmony to regain health and well-being (Hart, 2002; Mawhiney & Nabigon, 2011; Nabigon & Wenger-Nabigon, 2012).

Morrisseau (1998) describes his own healing process as a First Nations man seeking meaning and cultural identity, with emphasis on how each man's story and journey is unique. He states:

When I started to do this healing work, I had no idea to which clan I belonged, nor did I know the important role my clan played. It came as a simple surprise that I had been doing the teachings required of my clan before I knew my clan role. For some reason, I was fulfilling my purpose. All I needed to do was stay quiet, listen, and ask for guidance from the Elders and the Creator (p. 55).

Aim

In my role as a social worker, I counsel men of all ages who share similar stories of searching and longing for reconnection to culture and hopes of finding meaning through traditional teachings and guidance of the Elders. It is for this reason that I chose to focus this research specifically on men's healing, highlighting a small part of a man's journey in his quest to find personal balance and harmony through culture and tradition. Although the First Nations perspective of healing is holistic, this research focused on each participant's personal experience with the making of a Ribbon Shirt; a significant symbol of respect, pride and honouring of First Nations culture, which is worn only to special occasions and ceremonies.

During this project the research focused on the roles of First Nation men, these teachings also apply to the Metis participant. I struggled with the terminology, the government divides all Canadian Indigenous people in to three groups, these being First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples, for me there is no division, as Indigenous peoples of North America we all have unique names, a multitude of Indigenous languages, regions, customs, ceremonies, and traditions that make us unique nations of peoples. With this uniqueness there are also common indigenous roots to North America. For this research where not specifically defined it is implied that all men are indigenous to North America be it from a First Nations, Inuit or Metis ancestry.

The aim of this research is two-fold. First, this study will fill a critical gap in the literature that features the experiences of First Nations men participating in culturally focused programming. This is done by utilizing traditional activities as an avenue of healing from the impact of colonization and assimilation, specifically intergenerational, individual, and historical traumas, loss of culture and identity. Second, this research aims to promote the development of future programs, workshops and ceremonies for First Nations men in Sudbury, Ontario in order to support men as they receive teachings by Elders. This project followed three, urban men with First Nations ancestry as they created a Ribbon Shirt. The project explored the significant cultural meaning and how it strengthened the men's connection to their cultural identity and traditional knowledge.

Overview of Subsequent Chapters

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One offers an introduction to the roles of First Nations men, and the overshadowing effects of the intergenerational trauma left in the wake of government policies. This study highlights the experience of First Nations and Metis men participating in culturally centred programming. It will promote future direction for First

Nations and Metis programming in an urban setting. Chapter Two examines the literature about how Canadian government policies and the residential school system have restricted Indigenous cultural ceremonies, teachings and practices. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the importance of the First Nations Ribbon Shirt. Chapter Three outlines the methodology used to guide this research, namely phenomenology and photovoice and describes the setting of the research. Chapter Four outlines the data analysis procedures used in the study. Chapter Five presents the results of the interviews with the participants, explores the essence of the workshop, and highlights the importance of having access to the traditional program. Participants' experiences point to a need for a connection to Elders, the community, and each other. Chapter Six presents the interviews with the Elders, Helpers, and Traditional Coordinator which bring to light the importance of sharing these teachings. Roles, responsibilities, teachings and ceremonies are acknowledged as being the foundation to health and wellness. The Elders discuss their reasons for participating in this work and the importance of learning about men's roles within the First Nations culture and how to pass these teachings on to future generations. Chapter Seven focuses on the interpretation of the findings and implications for research in social work, the need for culturally appropriate services, and the importance of cultural teachings and workshops. The chapter concludes with the limitations and future research directions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter explores the history of colonization and the Canadian public policies that have negatively influenced First Nations peoples. These policies center on the Indian Act that was implemented in 1876, the Reservation system that confined Indigenous peoples to small plots of land, residential schools which forcibly removed children from family and community and the 60's scoop that again removed children from families. This is followed with how social work and First Nations people in Canada has evolved and how current practices of making attempt to incorporate Traditional teaching as healing is becoming more accessible and acceptable as useful practices with First Nations peoples. First Nations approaches to healing, Indigenous traditional activities, culture and healing, and how these are connected to the focus on Ribbon Shirt making and other Cultural activities that may be options that treatment programs and other helping professions are incorporating them with some success.

Public Policy and First Nations People

Canadian social policy has been instrumental in creating legislation and institutions that have eradicated First Nations people's value systems that existed for thousands of years and replaced them with inhumane policies (Menzies, 2009). The physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual challenges with which First Nations people in Canada face are rooted in socio-political factors, born out of colonization and attempts at assimilation. This has special relevance to the intergenerational trauma seen today in First Nation individuals, families, communities, and nations (Menzies, 2008).

Kirmayer, Tait, and Simpson (2009) note that "The Indian Act (1876) was the comprehensive piece of legislation directed towards the management if Aboriginal peoples in

Canada” (p.11). Prior to the 1950s it was a crime in Canada for First Nations people to gather in groups and perform traditional ceremonies as well as participate in cultural activities such as potlatch and the Sundance. The restrictions on cultural and social practices have been identified as part of the root cause of many challenges that First Nations and Metis people and communities face today.

Hanson (2009) highlights First Nations peoples’ contributions to Canada as a nation by drawing attention to the number of First Nations soldiers who voluntarily participated in the Second World War. Following the war in 1945 there was greater recognition by Canadians as to the plight of First Nations people in Canada which fueled an emphasis on human rights principles to be applied to First Nations people. As the Canadian story began to shift to include the contributions of First Nations people, prejudice began to decline. This understanding, along with Canada’s commitment to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), led to the revision of the Indian Act in 1951. At that time, the more oppressive sections of the Indian Act were either amended or removed marking a significant shift in First Nations’ history. Lesley’s (2002) article points out the changes that were made:

The ban on dances and ceremonies was lifted as was the ban on the purist of land claims. The discretionary powers of the minister were reduced in numbers, as were the number of penalty causes against Indians. Chiefs and band counsels received more powers to act as municipal-style governments...also included in these revisions was the change in the new definition of who was entitled to be an Indian... the need to specifically identify who was an Indian – at least in the government’s eyes and was thus entitled to receive government benefits such as mother allowance and old age pension, was prompted by the advent of the post-war welfare state. (Leslie, 2002, p. 26)

The Canadian government has used other instruments, including religious institutions, to transform First Nations communities. From 1840 – 1983, more than 100,000 First Nations and Metis children were sent to residential school system for the purpose of assimilation, segregation, and integration into mainstream Canadian society (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Menzies (2009) explains how separation from family for months, even years at a time, resulted in children losing their language, culture, and spiritual beliefs, as well as sense of belonging to a family. The trauma of separation from family and community has affected the ability of individuals to achieve balance in their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. As Menzies (2009) notes, “when experienced by more than one generation, personal trauma becomes institutionalized within a family” (p. 4). For several generations, this forced separation of children from their community had a silent impact; however, as this era was ending, a new scheme of removing children from biological families was introduced.

The child welfare system became the new instrument of government assimilation of Indigenous people, referred to as “the Sixties Scoop.” Between 1960 and 1985, 11,123 First Nations children were apprehended and subsequently adopted, primarily into non-Indigenous homes in Canada, the United States, and internationally (Sinclair, 2007). These numbers do not account for children who were non-Status Indians according to the Indian Act (Menzies, 2009; Sinclair 2007, 2017). Continued apprehension of Indigenous children continues in great numbers. Sinclair (2007) references Dr. Lauri Gilchrist of Lakehead University who noted that the “Sixties Scoop” has merely evolved into the “Millennium Scoop” and Aboriginal social workers, recruited into the ranks of social services and operating under the umbrella of Indian Child and Family Services, are now the ones doing the “scooping” (p. 67).

Menzies (2009) highlights that as adults, “former residential school students and child welfare system survivors have demonstrated symptoms of anxiety disorders, alcohol and substance abuse, depression, suicide, and low self-esteem that are significantly higher than those of the general population” (p. 4). The results of which reflect the loss of traditional roles and being separated from original family and community.

Social Work and First Nations People

The history of social work and First Nations people in Canada has been controversial at best. During the 1960s to 1980s, the profession worked within legislative policies intended to address poverty and child neglect experienced by children on First Nations reserves (Hart, Sinclair, & Bruyere, 2009). A change in focus for social workers came in the late 1960s, fueled by the publication of Harold Cardinal’s (1969) pivotal book *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians*. The ideas in this book challenged the policies that then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau proclaimed Canada as being a "just society." A promising round of consultations between the Government of Canada and First Nations leaders in which issues of First Nations and Treaty rights and the right of self-government were prominently discussed. However, First Nations people were outraged when Trudeau’s Minister of Indian Affairs, the Honourable Jean Chrétien (later Prime Minister of Canada) introduced a "White Paper" which advocated for the elimination of separate legal status for First Nations people in Canada. The “White Paper” amounted to an assimilation program, which, if implemented, would have repealed the Indian Act, transferred responsibility for Indian Affairs to the provinces and terminated the rights of First Nations people under the various treaties they had made with the Crown. This book was a pivotal tool in ensuring that these discussions happened.

The legacy of colonization and assimilation imposed upon First Nations people brought forth a call to approach social work in a culturally sensitive way because of the historical interaction between social workers and First Nations people. First Nations specific social work programs began to gain momentum in the 1970s with the Indian Control of Indian Education discussions and subsequently, the First -first Indigenous social work program originated at the First Nations University of Canada in Saskatchewan. The first graduating class from the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) occurred in 1974, a program that symbolized the manifestation of the call by Elders to change the way social work approaches First Nations people (Hart, Sinclair, & Bruyere, 2009). This new pedagogical approach would be assigned the task of addressing the social ramifications of the Indian Act policies in Canada. Elders and leaders further put forth a need for post-secondary education for First Nations students that would honour traditional knowledge and incorporate traditional teachings into all curriculums at the post-secondary level.

Benefits of Traditional Ways in Treatment Programs

For some people, traditional ways and guidance from Elders are being accessed more and more as First Nations, Inuit and Metis people are becoming educated and participating in mainstream research. Traditional teaching has been integrated into mainstream theoretical approaches (Absolon, 2010; Brady, 1995; Mawhiney & Nabigon, 2011; Nabigon & Wagner-Nabigon, 2012). With the introduction of Indigenous focused treatment centers and post-secondary education that focused on the history and culture of Indigenous peoples, there is more evidence about the benefits of traditional ways.

Literature reviews on First Nations men's healing initiatives were found in several studies; however, most were associated with incarceration or substance abuse treatment programs. The

conclusions highlighted the scarcity of First Nations aftercare programs for men (Fair, 2006; Gone, 2009; Naclia, 2009). A qualitative analysis of the Correctional Services Canada Program called ‘In Search of Your Warrior’, found that the programs used a blend of cognitive-behavioural therapy and traditional holistic approaches to address the needs of offenders (Naclia, 2009). These programs teach First Nations culture by introducing traditional ceremonies with the goal of instilling traditional values and beliefs, transferring newly acquired skills, attitudes and behaviours that can be brought into the community, and creating a sense of interconnectedness and belonging. Other studies explored indigenous healing (Struthers, 2000), re-becoming a Native American man (Krech, 2002), supporting First Nations men who are fathers (Manahan & Ball, 2007), and understanding the challenges and healing of First Nations men (Mussell, 2005).

These studies highlight the effectiveness and need to incorporate traditional and ceremonial knowledge to foster and strengthen recovery, healing and balance for First Nations men. Additional research findings illuminated the need for treatment to be a blend of both mainstream and traditional approaches to healing. Fair (2006) suggests a need to evaluate the effectiveness of this curricula and the benefit of the inclusion of traditional practices. Gone (2011) explored the use of the Medicine Wheel with First Nations men seeking wellness, by blending First Nations methods and western ‘therapy culture’ within a 12-step program.

Traditional Teachings as Healing

Research reveals the benefits of incorporating culture as healing in mental health practices and the value of Indigenous cultures. McCabe (2008) advocates that people know the steps to take to heal from anxiety and pain and for First Nations people this usually means a traditional healer in place of or in conjunction with a professional. McCabe (2008) further asserts that western science describes “Indigenous healing as superstitious mumbo jumbo” (p. 150) and

illustrates how science uses the image of rolling the bones of dead animals to discredit these ceremonies. As cultural and traditional activities are now more visible in mainstream media, the idea of First Nations ceremonies is becoming more respected and accepted. Traditional healing practices vary from region to region and from nation to nation; with this understanding, it is important to be respectful of the territory in which we do research.

Baskin (2011) discusses how spirit, blood memory, respect, interconnectedness, storytelling, feeling, experience, and guidance all play a part in Indigenous ways of helping. Indigenous epistemology supports the belief that while pondering the great mysteries of life, we must explore our inner self to make meaning of the world around us. A combination of both lived experience and inward journey provides helpers / social workers with the knowledge to contribute to the healing process.

Indigenous Traditional Activities, Culture and Healing

Singing, dancing and storytelling have been acknowledged to have healing powers by many Indigenous societies (Archibald & Dewar, 2011). Songs, dances and stories that First Nations people have told since the beginning of time, tell a story of how people used to live in balance and harmony. Several studies present compelling evidence that creativity and traditional activities are beneficial to treatment and healing such as music, dance, storytelling, drum making, receiving Elders' teachings / traditional knowledge, language programs, land-based activities, feasts, powwows, learning traditional art forms, and harvesting medicines (Archibald & Dewar 2011; Brady, 1995; Graham, 2014; Manahan & Ball, 2007; McCalman et al. 2009). Brady (1995) found that culture provided an effective path out of addictions for First Nations people in Australia and Canada. The findings brought attention to the importance of using cultural practices specific to Indigenous groups; noting differences among nations such as some

Indigenous groups not using the sweat lodge ceremony, while others hold the sweat lodge as being central to healing practice. Currie et al. (2013) explored illicit drug use among First Nations and Australian youth, highlighting how racism in urban settings impacts their drug use:

First Nations cultural participation may be a protective factor that promotes resilience, high self-regard, and protection against illicit and prescription drug problems among First Nations adults in an urban setting. These results support the growth of programs and services that enable and encourage First Nations people to maintain their cultural identity and traditions within cities, and further exploration of the ways in which First Nations cultural practices and beliefs may promote and protect First Nations health in the urban environment (p. 8).

Studies of First Nations and traditional activities (Archibald & Dewar, 2011) include both men and women, much of which was focused primarily on men who were incarcerated or in treatment centers (Brady, 1995; Fair, 2006; Graham, 2014). Research has focused on the benefits of women's hand drumming (Goudreau, 2006), powwow culture, singing and drumming as ways that strengthen identity of First Nations people (Tulk, 2008).

Further research highlights the importance of incorporating First Nations tradition and / or cultural, teaching and ceremonies; articles brought attention to the use of cultural practices as a positive addition to treatment plans and therapy. Struthers (2000) pointed out that in many cases, the First Nations people who participated in these programs were newly exposed to the traditional ways and this served as an introduction to their own historical cultural practices to maintain a balanced life. The blend of mainstream and traditional perspective appears to be very effective.

As noted earlier public policies have attempted to eliminate the First Nations worldview and value systems and replace them with doctrines that continue to be devastating both physically and psychologically for First Nations people in North America (Duran, 2006; Menzies, 2008). The development of a First Nations healing model to address intergenerational trauma is needed; one that incorporates First Nations teachings, but also illuminates how the policies have disrupted this worldview (Duran, 2006; Menzies, 2008). First Nations academics contribute to promoting a First Nations perspective and describe the importance of incorporating First Nations traditions into social work and healing practice (Baskin, 2011; Duran, 2006; Gone, 2013; Hart, 2002; McCabe, 2007; Menzies, 2008; Nabigon & Wagner-Nabigon, 2012; Stewart, 2008).

The Ribbon Shirt

There is a scarcity of literature on the traditional activity of making the Ribbon Shirt. There are descriptions of Ribbon Shirts being gifted or worn (Graywolf, 2013; NativeAmericanTIO, 2012) but a lack of information about how making a shirt is a traditional activity or its cultural significance and meaning. The traditional Ribbon Shirt represents honour, respect, heritage, pride and identification with one's culture and given teaching. With over 550 different tribes and Nations in North America, each may have its own story about the Ribbon Shirt, ribbons and colours. Chief Sophie Yates (2011) noted that Native American men of different tribes' wear Ribbon Shirts at important ceremonies and powwow celebrations. Ribbon Shirts are especially popular regalia pieces for male dancers or for men to wear at celebrations (NativeAmericanTIO, 2012). The traditional colours of a tribe, colours to match regalia or personal colours that are unique to the individual may be selected. Metcalfe (2010) illustrates some of the history of Ribbon Shirt making and makes reference to the fact that bright colors for

competitive dancing are often favored when making regalia. Graywolf (2013) noted that the use of any fabric print and ribbon can be used when constructing a Ribbon Shirt; however, it is best to use colours that complement each other. In spite of this, there is a lack of available research involving the Ribbon Shirt and in particular, First Nations men in North America constructing and wearing a Ribbon Shirt.

Summary

The history of First Nations people since contact has been one of disruption as to the traditional practices of Indigenous peoples of North America. More recently, Canadian public policy has, in many respects, hindered the healthy growth of First Nations people in Canada. Loss of language, culture and land are direct results of the long-standing effects of colonization. Traditional practices and ceremony have been highlighted in the research as the most beneficial way for First Nations people to heal from the loss of culture, language, and traditions. The literature on First Nations men's health and the making of a Ribbon Shirt is sparse. However, the experience of men learning about and receiving traditional teachings about the Ribbon Shirt and participating in ceremony is unique.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter introduces the research questions to be explored in the study. The chapter continues with an in-depth examination of the sampling procedures and outlines the design of specific features of the study including the setting, recruitment, qualitative questions, and demographic questions. Finally, data collection procedures are detailed.

Research Question and Design

The aim of this study was to explore the experience and benefits of men participating in a Ribbon Shirt Making Workshop. The primary research question is: “What are the experiences of urban, First Nations and Metis men who participate in the making of a traditional Ribbon Shirt?” In order to provide a solid base from which to ask this question, two sub-questions were explored:

What were the benefits of participating in this process?

What impact has participating in this program had on their life?

Setting

The research study took place at Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre (SKHC) in Sudbury, Ontario. This primary health care center addresses the physical, mental and spiritual health of peoples with First Nations, Metis and Inuit ancestry and their families including the challenges associated with the legacy of intergenerational trauma. The center provides service to over 5,000 clients per year. According to the SKHC website:

the center is an Aboriginal Health Access Centre (AHAC) dedicated to providing equal access and quality health care for all First Nations, Metis and Inuit People in the city of

Greater Sudbury [and] ... promoting balanced and healthy lifestyles about First Nations”
(Retrieved February 4, 2015 from <http://skhc.ca/about/about-skhc>).

All programs and services support traditional First Nations values encompassing the interconnectedness of emotional, spiritual, physical and mental well-being. The center is guided by the beliefs and values within the teachings of the Seven Sacred Grandfathers: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth. Services fall into two categories: medical-based health services and community-based health programs. Medical-based services include primary care, which is administered by a team of family physicians and nurse practitioners addressing health care concerns (Retrieved February 4, 2015 from <http://skhc.ca/about/about-skhc>).

Community-based health programs encourage physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, with a focus on self-sufficiency, guidance and support to high-risk groups and also available to the general population to promoting health and well-being. The traditional program offers services that encourage traditional and cultural practices within the community through support groups, workshops, traditional medicines, a wild meat food bank, ceremony and visiting Elders. The mental health program offers case management, counselling, and therapy for individuals, couples and families. A healthy choices program offers programs to First Nations families and their children affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and related conditions (Retrieved February 4, 2015 from <http://skhc.ca/about/about-skhc>).

Sampling Procedures

This research used criterion sampling. Creswell (2013) notes that a narrow range of sampling is needed for a phenomenological study and criterion sampling works well when participants have experienced the phenomenon. The participants identified as male, with First Nations, Metis or Inuit ancestry, and had a willingness and interest to learn about traditional

teachings and make a men's Ribbon Shirt. Participants were excluded if they had accessed social work / mental health counselling from the researcher who is employed as a social worker at SKHC.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through a poster (see Appendix A) displayed in the main lobby at SKHC. The poster directed interested participants to contact the mental health program to verify that they met the criteria for participation. During this process, they were asked about First Nations ancestry and availability to complete the sessions for the six week schedule. Four men were ineligible for participation as they had received prior social work services from the researcher. Two other men were ineligible due to a conflict with their schedule. Six males that fit the criteria were invited to attend the first session of the program; however, only three men attended and could commit to the project in its entirety.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers conduct their studies in the setting where participants live and work. Creswell (2013) asserts that people are most open when they are in familiar territory and that such a setting can help mitigate power imbalances during an interview. Creswell (2013) offers a succinct, yet thorough definition of qualitative research:

To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals calls for action (p. 47).

Qualitative Research and Indigenous Peoples

When each of us shares an experience of the story, we can see that we all have a slightly different version. Our lived experience, cultural teachings and individual backgrounds add to the diversity of the experience. As we try to make meaning and find the benefits of an experience; our story gives clues. Like in this research the story telling that each man and Elder are sharing, paint a picture of their involvement that they each experienced this event differently and highlighted at the same time similarities. (Baskin, 2011; Hart, 2007; Kovach, 2009; McCabe, 2007; Menzies, 2008; Struthers, 2000, Struthers & Peden-McAlpine, 2005). Liamputtong (2007) notes that this research method is flexible, fluid and best suited to understanding the meaning and interpretations as participants tell the stories of their lived experience. This method allows the researcher to “hear the voices of those who are silenced, othered and marginalized by the dominant social order” (p. 7). The study gave participants an opportunity to explain, in their own words, their feelings and experiences during the study. This allowed the essence of their experiences to surface in a story form which is part of Indigenous culture. By using a qualitative method there is more meaning in the data. The interpretations are more authentic and descriptive and there is an opportunity to see similarities and differences in each participant’s experience.

Phenomenology

This study explored the lived experience of First Nations men participating in a Ribbon Shirt Making workshop. First Nations and Metis people use story telling as a way to communicate histories and experiences. To explore the benefits of this workshop, the participant’s narratives were used to highlight their experience of participating; this approach to the data analysis fits well with the story telling found in First Nations culture. Individual experiences provided a rich and varied data collection; this allowed for the similarities to be highlighted as well and maintaining

each participant individuality. The analysis was guided by Creswell's (2013) adapted version of Colaizzi's (1978) process for phenomenological analysis. The first step in this was to read through and listen to the interviews again. As the interviews spanned many weeks, reading and rereading the interview transcripts allowed me to reacquaint myself with their content. Next, I organized statements from each interview which related to the phenomenon of the experience. Once the selected statements were highlighted, these were grouped into themes which showed common patterns across the experiences. To reflect the research data accurately, I used direct quotations from the participants. Next, I grouped the statements, and then began to write what the statements meant and created themes from the statements. I then grouped similar themes together and organizes them into categories. Finally, these were organized into a comprehensive description of the men participating in the workshop, then this was all done I had each participant read to ensure the statements were valid and true to verify the results. Shosha (2012) discusses how the application of Colaizzi's process of descriptive phenomenology provides an exhaustive description to the body of knowledge about human experience and therefore is an effective strategy to establish the basis for future research.

Phenomenology and Indigenous Peoples

Phenomenology is well-suited to research with Indigenous peoples as it complements holistic Indigenous cultural ways of life and values. Peden-McAlpine and Struthers (2005) highlight the link between phenomenology and Indigenous oral tradition, "in the narrative process, this method elicits significant implicit meaning of indigenous culture and assists with recording the essence of experiences and events of Indigenous societies" (p. 1264). Telling participants' stories highlights the capacity to reflect on change which will enhance health in a holistic and culturally acceptable manner and best supports First Nations, Metis, and Inuit

peoples. Peden-McAlpine and Struthers (2005) suggest studies utilizing a phenomenological approach provide:

seamless links with Indigenous peoples and their culture, as it employs the natural inherent methods of oral tradition, narratives, and stories, and depicts the quintessence of time during the research process. Phenomenological research solicits sensitive and deep answers to questions extracting meaning from statements and opinions (p. 1274)

The events that took place during this research may never reoccur or may be recreated. Collecting the voices and opinions of the participants at this moment in time provides a more authentic view of their experiences. Phenomenology allows for the essence of a unique experience to be explored and shared; the findings can highlight the worldviews of Indigenous peoples (Kovach, 2009; Struthers, 2000, Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell, 2008; Struthers & Peden-McAlpine, 2005).

Photovoice

Wang and Burris (1997) describe photovoice as a process, an educational tool, a participatory action research method and a participatory health promotion strategy. Participants capture their life experiences through the photography and then share the stories / narratives behind their photographs. Wang and Burris (1997) assert that the theoretical foundations of photovoice come from feminist theory, empowerment education and documentary photography. Wang and Burris (1997) discuss photovoice as having three overarching objectives: “(1) to enable people to record and reflect their community’s strengths and concerns, (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and (3) to reach policymakers” (p. 370).

Traditionally photovoice studies follow a format as put forth by Wang (1999), which proceeds in steps as the key components to undertaking a photovoice project. First, participants are recruited, give consent, and then receive training that will introduce them to the study, the process of photovoice, and how to use the cameras. Second, participants complete the photovoice project through capturing images of importance as relevant to the topic of research. Third, participants take part in a group discussion with other participants during which they engage in storytelling of photographs, group analysis and selection of images that will be shared to represent their project (Wang, 1999).

Once the pictures are chosen, the group works together to formulate the next steps and / or action that will be taken to address issues, whether through sharing information with the community or influencing policy makers (Wang, 1999). Wang and Burris (1997) describe the method as flexible and with the potential to be adapted to accommodate different groups, communities, and health-centered topics. The benefit of photovoice as a research method lies in its flexibility and adaptability; and is used in various contexts across diverse groups of people. Photovoice is especially applicable to social work research in that both are centered in ideologies of collaboration, equality, empowerment and social justice.

Photovoice and Indigenous Peoples

Photovoice is suitable to the unique needs of First Nations men in multiple ways. Men are often behind the scenes in activities as quiet observers; often not having a voice in what is happening in their experiences. My observation is that there is often a focus on women and children, leaving men's issues and concerns silenced. Giving men the opportunity to take photos of their experiences followed by interviews where they viewed the photographs permits them to show and articulate their perspectives in a creative way; through a medium that does not rely on

verbal expression alone. Another benefit is that there will be a visual reminder of the knowledge that has been acquired through these activities; a diary so to speak, of the program from beginning to final product.

Data Collection

The Ribbon Shirt Making Workshop was offered by the Traditional Program at SKHC. This six-session workshop was designed to offer a small group of First Nations and Metis men the opportunity to receive traditional teachings about men's roles and create a Ribbon Shirt. Each session lasted roughly 3 hours and included teachings, circles and ceremonies with the Elders as well as the sewing of shirts.

To collect visual data, participants used cameras provided by SKHC during workshop sessions. These cameras stayed onsite at SKHC and were locked in a file cabinet in the Wellness Building between sessions. The researcher provided instructions to participants on how to use the cameras along with an explanation of the photovoice portion of this project. As the men worked on their project, I took additional photographs. This was to ensure a sufficient number of pictures from which the men could choose for the Photo-Voice Exhibit. During one of the final sewing sessions, a selection of 50 pictures was displayed. The men were given an opportunity to write their thoughts or feelings about their favorite pictures and posted notes on the corresponding photograph. The photographs with comments were saved to a memory stick and printed in larger format. These photographs were stored in locked file box until they were hung on a wall along with the participants' printed statements. These photographs stayed posted for 7 days in SKHC, after the final week of being displayed they have been removed and stored in locked file box for future events where this workshop photovoice pictures will be shared.

The photographs selected for the Photovoice Exhibit (Appendix H) were also displayed for the interview sessions that were guided by the interview questions (Appendix C). Choosing to display the photographs during the interviews was done for the purpose to remind the men, Elders and helper to keep them focus on the events of the Ribbon Shirt Making Workshop and the Photovoice exhibit. All interviews occurred after completion of the Ribbon Shirt and photovoice exhibit. Six interviews took place at SKHC. I conducted all interviews using the semi-structured interview guide (Appendix C) for the participants and (Appendix D) for the Elders and Helpers. All interviews were audio recorded.

Compensation

Although there was no financial compensation, participants were provided with supplies, materials and meals while in attendance for the workshop through the Traditional Program at Shkagamik-Kwe. All expenses for the Ribbon Shirts were also provided by SKHC. The completed shirts were gifted to the men to be added to their personal sacred bundle.

Personal Sacred Bundles consist of many items gathered from participating in ceremonies such as Fasting, Sweat-lodge, Sunrise, Sunset, Healing, etc. The bundle can consist of a sacred pipe, drum, rattles, eagle feathers or other types of feathers, medicines such as sweetgrass, sage, cedar, tobacco, etc., Stones (grandfathers), wampum, a shell used for smudging, matches, and many other gifts that have been gifted to the bundle carrier. All these items are unique to each person, for example, one person may only have one feather or a stone while another may have a song or a teaching.

Zedeño (2008) defines a personal bundle as a kind of possessions that are collections of knowledge about specific rituals that are shared only among initiated individuals. Although every bundle is, in a sense is, as unique as a human, bundles share a number of significant

characteristics. Bundles may also have other items associated with them, for example, clothing and adornment worn by the bundle holders, a painted horse, or a painted lodge or tipi. Hanson (1980) and Foster (1994) following criteria, bundles may be grouped into three broad cross-cultural categories:

Personal, medicinal, and ceremonial. Personal bundles are biographical, that is, they contain objects associated with singular events of a person's life, for example, visions, crises, illnesses, journeys, and special gifts. Each object in a personal bundle reminds its holder of his or her success at overcoming difficulties and averting danger. Personal bundles may be used for prayer as well as for physical and spiritual protection and good luck (p.203).

For the purposes of this study, a personal sacred bundle is defined as follows: an object or set of objects which (1) is kept in wrappings when not in use; (2) serves as a repository for the transfer of supernatural power; (3) has its origin in individual visions or complex myths, either of which imposes rules of ritual use and care; (4) is acquired through visions or other institutionalized means; and (5) may or may not be transferable (Hanson, 1980, p. 200).

Some of these items may be only used by the carrier or they may be gifted to someone else. Bundle items ultimately belong to creation and are borrowed and taken care of by the carrier. In my sacred bundle I have gathered and been gifted many items such as medicines, stories and teachings over the years; some items I have also shared and gifted out. The Ribbon Shirts, teachings and ceremony were added to participants' unique, sacred personal bundle.

Researcher Perspectives

Moustakas (1994) notes that in phenomenological study researchers must set aside their own experience. In a conceptual article on bracketing in qualitative research, Tufford and

Newman (2012) highlight perfectly that the role of a researcher involves paying close attention to the voices that have been silenced. This provides a stage for participants to share their experience with as little bias as possible and encourages researchers to gain awareness of the power differentials with all who participate in the research. The process of bracketing is to be reflexive I can make note of my biases and to not use them to influence my data analysis.

Bracketing for me as a researcher starts by identifying with my culture as a First Nations woman. I was born and raised in Whitefish Falls, Ontario, and am a member of the Whitefish River First Nation. I have spent my career as a social worker and a primary school teacher working with First Nations Cree and Ojibwa in Ontario, I have not participated in a Ribbon Shirt making workshop, but I have participated in some cultural teachings, and I have received teachings for and made a traditional hand drum to add to my bundle.

Throughout this research, I used a reflective bracketing journal which included both written notes and photographs of the items that were used such as sewing machines, fabric books, room set-up and group gatherings. As a reflective journal, reviewing the pictures was helpful when there was insufficient time for note-taking. In this journal, I reflected on my thoughts, feelings, and reactions about what took place during the research and writing of the thesis. Being a woman with no experience in the creation of men's traditional garments allowed me to remain curious and focus on how each man participated. Observing their progress allowed me to recognize the themes and patterns that were beginning to form during the workshop's progression.

Although I have been a social worker at SKHC for the last six years within the Four Directions mental wellness program, I have no prior experience working with men participating in either a photovoice project or a Ribbon Shirt making workshop. As such, during the data

collection process, I reflected on how I was impacted emotionally to illuminate personal bias and preserve the integrity of this research. I reviewed my journal with my Elders as needed to ensure that I located my position during this research project.

Smith (1999) distinguishes between the insider / outsider researcher perspective. The insider researcher perspective is respectful, reflective, and critical while the outsider perspective can identify interesting and important cultural meanings usually taken for granted or even neglected by insiders. I am an insider researcher given my shared cultural background with the participants and membership in the community. However, I am also an outsider researcher in that I am a woman, I am a counsellor that works with men, I possess two university degrees and am a professional in the community where social workers are not viewed in the most positive light. It took many weeks for the participants to become more comfortable with me; each man seeing me more as a helper than a researcher.

The outsider researcher is also called upon to be humble; as being a member of the community means an acknowledgment of a different set of roles, relationships, statuses and positions. As an Ojibway woman, this is where my teachings become fundamental to my ability to find balance as a social worker. I made efforts to use the teachings that I have received during this research journey, both culturally and academically. As a form of self-care, I sought advice and counsel from Elders about my work and said prayers for the men and women with whom I work. I participated in cultural ceremonies and gatherings as they arose throughout this journey. To ensure that my wellbeing was addressed, I worked with awareness, sensitivity and competence to acknowledge differences among First Nations and Metis. I attempted to recognize the importance of these differences and focus on the skills, knowledge and attitudes of all participants (Papps & Ramsden, 1996). My self-reflection process was intended to understand

their cultural values and norms and how these may differ due to unique socio-political histories and contexts. I aimed to embody empathy and to share participants' emotions and feelings in such a way that will, in turn, hopefully improve the therapeutic encounter between participants and their communities, potentially leading to better health outcomes for First Nations, Inuit, and Metis men. As a woman of First Nations descent, I adhered to the seven Grandfather teachings and asked for guidance from Elders as needed, to ensure that gathered information is treated with the utmost respect and integrity. I felt honored and privileged to be given this opportunity to explore this topic and add to the literature about issues that First Nations men are facing in this urban setting.

Summary

Working with men, I have found that there are very few programs to help men on their healing journey. This led me to wonder about the effectiveness of the programming that is available. The Ribbon Shirt making workshop was a suitable program that could incorporate culture, creativity, and also provide an experience in which many men may not have the opportunity to participate.

Photovoice and phenomenology are good alternative ways to bring out the voice of the men. Many First Nations use stories to share about an experience. The open-ended questioning of phenomenology and the visual representation of the modified Photovoice project worked well to capture the experience of all participants in this Ribbon Shirt making workshop.

Hart (2007) writes about the importance of the research that First Nations People do for and with First Nations peoples:

As Aboriginal people, we must reclaim our worldviews, knowledge, languages, and order to find the path ahead. We must sustain our relationship with our environment and follow

our Elders' advice. We must rebuild our nations on our worldviews and our good values. We must be patient and thorough, because there are no shortcuts in rebuilding ourselves, our families, our relationships, our spiritual ceremonies, and our solidarity. We must use our abilities to make good choices (p. 89).

This research and the methods chooses does just that by using direct quotes from the men who have First Nations and Metis ancestry and the Elders that shared their teachings and personal stories.

CHAPTER FOUR - DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter explores the data analysis methods used in this study and how the data was assessed for rigor and trustworthiness. The chapter concludes with a review of the ethical procedures used in this study.

Data Analysis of Interviews

Following the sixth and final session, individual interviews took place with participants, Elders, Helpers and the Traditional Coordinator. Holloway and Galvin (2005) highlight that phenomenological research seeks to gain an understanding of a “lived experience” (p. 136) concerning a specific phenomenon. Wimpenny and Gass (2000) further note that “the interview is considered the main method of data collection in phenomenological research as it provides a situation where the participants' descriptions can be explored, illuminated and gently probed” (p. 1487). Each interview lasted approximately one hour, and all interviewees were provided with the opportunity to view their transcript and make revisions before the data analysis. The interviews took place at SKHC and were audio recorded once consent was obtained. During the interviews I took additional notes by hand to refer to during the data analysis and writing stages.

This study employed phenomenology as a research and analysis method (Colaizzi, 1978; Creswell, 2013, 2014; Giorgi, 1975; Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989). As a first step, the transcripts were read in their entirety, this gave a sense about the experience of all participants in the research. In addition, I listened to the audiotapes again for the emotional tone, cadences, nuances and silences. I read the interview transcripts a second time to divide the data into meaningful sections. At this point I decided to separate the analysis of the participants from the Elders, Helpers and Traditional Coordinator. Separating into the two groups allowed the

experiences of the participant to highlight the new learning and the interest that the participants had.

Creswell (2013) advises to “take the significant statements and group them into larger units of information” (p. 193). These units of information or themes were created from the statements from the transcribed interviews. Once this was completed, a description of the themes explained the participants experience with the making of a Ribbon Shirt. In reading the transcripts I highlighted significant statements from each of the two groups of interviews. These statements were then organized into categories and clusters of themes. This allowed for a commonality of experience while maintaining participant individuality. Following this step, the central themes of the phenomenon were described. This is where “the “essence” of the experience and represents the culminating aspects of a Phenomenological study” (p. 194). I expanded upon the emerging themes and utilized participant quotes to support said themes.

Assessing for Rigor and Trustworthiness of the Data

Standards of validation and evaluation, developed for quantitative studies to ensure reliability and validity, do not accommodate qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four criteria to be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility encompasses activities that increase the probability that trustworthy findings were produced (Creswell, 2013). Prolonged engagement with the participants and member checking, the act of returning to the participants for verification of the accuracy of one’s findings, are frequently utilized to ensure credibility. In addition, I reminded each participant before the interview to be as descriptive as possible and asked for expansion during the

interview. This study also employed member checking to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations of the participants' interview transcripts. Each participant was provided a copy of their transcribed interview to review and make revisions.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the probability that the study findings have meaning to others in similar situations (Creswell, 2007). The clear description of the study procedures helped to ensure transferability of the study findings to other populations and settings, such as the workshop agenda (Appendix J).

Dependability

Dependability concerns the transparency of researchers in outlining their decision-making processes utilized during the analysis of the data and development of their conclusions or findings. This ensures that the study findings are consistent and accurate. Clear documentation of these decision points provides an audit trail (Creswell, 2013).

Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree to which the analysis and conclusions reflect the aims of the study and are supported by the data, versus reflecting the researcher's prior assumptions or preconceptions (Creswell, 2013). The audit trail provides a means of tracing the data and outlines the way that the researcher arrived at themes, interpretations, and findings. Phenomenological research recognizes that the researcher, as the measurement tool, inherently contains preconceived, unconscious beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions that influence the data collection and analysis (Ibid., 2013). Qualitative researchers must recognize and identify how their preconceptions and knowledge may influence data collection, analysis and interpretation. I used journaling to document my values, attitudes, prejudices, knowledge, and expertise prior to the

initiation of the research. This also provides a record as to decisions in the development of the study. Before and during the data collection process, I noted observations of the emotional reactions that were evident throughout these workshops. These observations served as useful reminders during the data analysis phase.

Assessing for Validity of the Data

To validate this research, strategies of prolonged engagement and persistent observation were used. Creswell (2013) suggests that close contact with participants is essential for effective research as this builds trust. I participated in peer review and debriefing by accessing the Elders to ensure the integrity of the process and asking questions about methods, meanings and interpretations (Kovach, 2009). I also used member checking with participants, Elders, Helpers, and the Traditional Coordinator who can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account. These three strategies allowed for accuracy in this study.

Photographs

The use of photographs in this study had a dual purpose. The first was to elicit more descriptive responses to the interview questions and the second was in the photovoice exhibit. Over the course of the research approximately 100 photographs were taken by me and the participants. During workshop sessions, the participants selected certain photographs which were printed and hung on the wall, gallery style. The participants were then given post it notes to write comments, memories, feelings or ideas as they looked at these pictures. Once this was complete the pictures and the matching comments were typed and printed out in larger format.

The evening of the Photovoice Exhibit the photographs and statements were displayed in the public meeting space for the evening. During this event family and friends had an opportunity to see the work that went into the men creating their Ribbon Shirts. The Photographs

were taken down and used again during the individual interviews. These photographs will be used again as reference for future men's Ribbon Shirt making workshops at SKHC.

Ethics

This research complied with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Standards of Practice (2008). As a social worker, this research will be used to advocate for change in the best interest of clients, and for the overall benefit of society, the environment and the global community. Researchers need to protect their research participants by developing trust with them, promoting the integrity of the research, guarding against misconduct, and managing unanticipated and challenging problems (Creswell, 2014).

The following safeguards were used to protect the participants' rights:

- 1) Participants, Elders, Helpers, and Traditional Coordinator were advised in writing of the voluntary nature of their participation, including their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. They were also advised that at any time during the process they could decline to answer any question.
- 2) The research objectives were clearly delineated in writing and articulated to the participants, Elders, Helpers, and Traditional Coordinator.
- 3) Participants, Elders, Helpers, and Traditional Coordinator signed a consent form.
- 4) The participants, Elders, Helpers, and Traditional Coordinator were informed in writing of all data collection methods and activities.
- 5) Written transcriptions and interpretations of the data were provided to the participants, Elders, Helpers, and Traditional Coordinator.
- 6) The risk to the participants, Elders, Helpers and Traditional Coordinator was considered minimal.

Fulfilling the Thesis Project and the Research

Following approval by the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board, recruitment and selection of participants began. Each participant was given a schedule of workshop dates and estimated interview dates (Appendix L). The schedule consisted of six afternoons within a six-week period, an evening photovoice session, and one additional interview time that was scheduled with each participant, Elder, Helper, and Traditional Coordinator. The first session involved providing instruction for the use of the cameras and how the photos will be selected and displayed. Elders opened this workshop with a sharing circle that included introductions, teachings, and ceremonies. The following four sessions focused on the creation of the Ribbon Shirts and the traditional teachings connected to these. Seamstresses were available at these sessions to assist in the sewing as needed. Session five involved the creation of the photovoice exhibit, whereby photos were selected, printed, mounted and displayed. Session six, the final session, culminated in the presentation of the photovoice exhibit. This was an evening activity where the stakeholders, friends and family were invited to view the photovoice exhibit. The Traditional Program distributed a poster (Appendix K) to advertise this event.

Summary

The interviews provided rich data to be analyzed. Throughout the study, rigor and trustworthiness for this topic was followed and reviewed to ensure the protection of cultural sensitivity and the experience of the participants, Elders, Helpers, and Traditional Coordinator as a true representation of their experience in this workshop. The use of photovoice also provided visual data that maximized the essence of the experience. As First Nations people are a vulnerable population, the ethical protocols in this project were carefully followed to ensure they were honoured.

CHAPTER FIVE - RESULTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative findings from the study and explores participants' experiences about the Ribbon Shirt making workshop and photovoice exhibit. Respondent narratives support the themes and provide rich and contextual information. The primary research question for this project is: "What are the experiences of urban, First Nations, and Metis men who participate in the making of a traditional Ribbon Shirt?" In order to provide a solid base from which to ask this question, two sub-questions were explored:

- What were the benefits of participating in this process?
- What impact has participating in this program had on their life?

Benefits of Participating in the workshop

The benefits from participating in this workshop, focused on gaining emotional balance, learning about sacred. The following is the quotes from the men that express their experience of the listed benefits.

Emotional Balance

Participants described being emotionally balanced to better support the people in their lives. Men have the role of Fire Keepers, this is something that these men took to heart, that they have a responsibility to be a care taker. One participant noted:

I am feeling one step closer to being a healthier man. I am making better choices. And to demonstrate that and to show that, I am that kind of person that actions speak louder than words so by participating in that I am also showing the community that I am doing this, you know, acknowledging. I am not just talking about it; I'm doing it (Marc).

This speaks to the benefit this man felt; not just talking about cultural things but taking action, particular to his community.

In addition to the benefits of feeling more balanced on a personal level, the same participant spoke about applying the teachings to manage his daily life showing that there were multiple benefits that this individual could describe:

I got my spirit guide, the stingray, I'm not so quick to using my stinger and at one time I was quick on that. So, when I look at the stingray, it's a gentle animal, it's a very gentle animal. It can defend itself, but it doesn't necessarily always resolve to sting other people. That is my perspective on it. I'm using it as my guide ... just gently glides in the water and even though the water in the ocean could be very rough, it still able to be peaceful (Marc).

This participant notes the benefits to sitting with the Elder, joining in ceremony and receiving guidance on how to utilize our traditional tools to deal with the stressors throughout the day. Teachings about roles, colours, spirit names, clans, and spirit guides are all part of the teaching that the Elders share to help guide an individual. This quote shows how this new learning is applied to his daily life.

Colours

There was connection to the colours: spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical. Each colour choice told a story. One participant shared:

One of the colors is red, one is white and that to me I put them close together because if it wasn't for those two dominant cultures coming together, I wouldn't be here today. Black is also significant because I've been dealing a lot with the western doorway in the past couple of years ... that's what it represents to me (Marc).

One participant discussed the simplicity in the colours by noting “I kept mine very simple, four colours in four directions” (Jack). As dreaming is vital for First Nations people, one participant used the message he received in a dream to choose his colours, “I wanted to bring those colours out from that dream ... there is some things that I wanted to put just to make some of that design standout (Vince). This same participant connected the colours with his knowledge of his culture and his identity as a First Nations man, “there is a certain pride [in] ... [finding] out your colors and putting those colors together, because that’s a process in itself, because you want to present yourself in a way that you know that reflects your spirit” (Vince).

The reference to the relationship that the participants had to their choice of ribbon and shirt colours was another way that the men showed an old or a new understanding to the spirit and ceremonial connections that the colours represented. The references to colours highlighted the continuous evolution of knowledge coupled with new understandings.

Feeling of Inclusion

Throughout this project each of the participants described feeling connected to self, family, or community. Each man shared elements of gaining a new or strengthened understanding of his role within and within community. One participant was able to express what he was feeling and explained:

It goes back to knowing self, understanding self, so then because it’s after that, it reflects, you know how you treat your family and your community and then your nation right, how that works, right, but it all comes back to you; now in order to do that, you know you got to really understand yourself first (Vince).

Participation in the workshop involved a deeper meaning than solely the creation of a Ribbon Shirt. The addition of the Elders' teachings supported participants' understanding of self-esteem and cultural identity.

Creativity

Being creative came from many places for these participants. One participant noted the visual representation and information being shared in a non-verbal manner, "bringing out the creativity ... I know that a lot of us have that ability because we had to, it was our thinking, making things, not only making them, but to make them, you know, appealing (Vince). The expression of creativity plays a role in the overall understanding of what was happening in each participant and is tied to the connectedness and communication of the group. This continues on a verbal and non-verbal communication of each member.

The other two men spoke of using teachings they already had. One man using a representation to show his connection to the wolf clan, this man he was not sure if his shirt was for him or if he was making it for a family member. He was drawing on his creativity to represent the healing that this shirt is to be doing. "I kept mine very simple, four colors in four directions, put my clan on there" (Jack). The other man showed his connection to a specific nation of people. "I wanted to be representative of my culture, my Metis culture. There are a lot of similarities because we take some from First Nation and we take some from European... because the Metis adopted the infinity sign as one of our symbols and our flag" (Mark). The creativity was inspired from teachings, life experience and a need to communicate in a non-verbal way.

Ceremony

During the photovoice exhibit each participant was given an opportunity to share with the attendees how they felt and had changed. The photovoice exhibit began with a ceremony where the men were gifted their shirts and then smudged to be included in their sacred bundles in a good way. One participant shared:

I had a lot of anxiety, but I was able to voice that ... I felt safe, but my anxiety was really, really high because for years I have been asking that I wanted to be heard and the opportunity was there, and I was like okay, everybody is listening now, so what do I say ... That was a ceremony for me. It was really important because it was the shirt, but it was acknowledging me. I was proud of the work that I had done but I was also thankful to have participated in that kind of ceremony. It was like being inducted in the hall of fame or something. It was really like being given a trophy (Marc).

Another participant shared how he felt when asked about speaking at the Photovoice Exhibit. This was more than just being given a shirt; this was a moment being in ceremony with a group of friends and family. For this young man he shared how he was feeling that evening:

...that felt uplifting, an accomplishment and there was a release too. When you hang on to all the stuff inside, again, it gets to you. That was my first time in my whole life I shared that in a group of people (Jack).

Hearing the men disclose feelings of anxiety and pride speak to the gained benefits of participating in culturally focused and relevant activities.

Identity

Participants spoke of reclaiming identity and forming new identities. One participant explained, “people know me ... where I am from, who I am ... the thing is that a lot of people feel like because I am Metis. We’re different ... I was given that opportunity to show that we are

here (Marc). Some participants found a new identity through the workshop. One participant shared:

That felt uplifting, an accomplishment and there was a release too. That was my first time in my whole life I shared that in a group of people because everybody had known me as a rather strong guy, working all the time, but they had also known me as a drunk so it's the first time in my life that I had been clean for a while (Jack).

The quotes about identity are valuable in understanding how including cultural elements such as sessions and ceremony with Elders have made an impact of participating in this activity. Having the men share in how individual identity is connected to the larger groups of people when participating in the ceremony helps define who they are individually. Each of the men that participated in the group gathering highlighted how it allowed each man to feel part of a community in a positive way.

Healing Journey

Healing, framed as the balance of one's self on the medicine wheel, was described in holistic terms "I am getting my health back ... a little healing kind of thing for me as well when I was making this shirt" (Jack). Historical teachings, along with the Ribbon Shirt, reminded participants to find balance. One participant explained:

I felt something was telling me I need to take care of myself more because first they couldn't find a shirt that fit me then the one they got me was perfect but it's big ... it humbled me in that way where you might want to start looking at may be your physical part of your medicine wheel (Marc).

The medicine wheel teachings are utilized by many First Nation social workers and program planners in First Nations settings. Medicine Wheels can be pedagogical tools for

teaching, learning, contemplating, and understanding our human journeys at individual, community or nation. Within Medicine Wheels there are many, many teachings that exist. These teachings have significant meaning independently but are all the more powerful when understood as a collective of interdependent knowledge teachings and practices. Some of these teachings include: seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter), stages of life (infant, youth, adult, Elder), and life givers (earth, sun, water, air), to name a few. This is a tool that helps guide understanding. Showing how these men utilized this terminology illustrates how it is vital to use something that is already common and easily communicated to participants that seek out involvement in teachings, ceremonies, and workshops that are culturally focused.

Summary

This chapter included the themes that emerged from the interviews conducted after the completion of the Ribbon Shirt and Photovoice exhibit. Each theme speaks to the experience these men had during the workshop, the interconnectedness of the ideas, and the complexity of the project. Emotional balance, colours, feeling of inclusion, creativity, ceremony, identity and healing journey; are the themes that came through as the men spoke about this experience. Each individual theme was important but part of the narrative of the men's experience of creating a ribbon shirt. This is where the participants reflected on his individual identity but also shared the benefit of being part of the larger First Nation's community of friends and family.

CHAPTER 6 – SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE ELDERS AND HELPERS

Introduction

Words from the Elders help guide and support us as we journey through life. The Elders and helpers in this project were a wealth of information and guidance. This chapter is included to share the knowledge that is often overlooked and omitted. The loss of language, ceremony, teachings and ways of life are directly linked to the effects of colonization. The men having these teaching, be it for the first time or as a reminder, is a way to strengthen the connection to culture, which in turn helps strengthen personal identity. This knowledge that was share by the elders is a glimpse into the historical life of Indigenous peoples of this continent.

The inclusion of Elders in the workshop can be described as the heart of First Nations pedagogy and education. Since pre-colonial times, Elders have been the gatekeepers of First Nations wisdom, knowledge, and history. Elders practice and impart tradition, culture knowledge, values, and lessons using storytelling, songs, ceremonies and role modeling traditional practices. The inclusion of the elders is the stability of providing cultural safety.

Cultural safety is an important element to be observed and practiced when providing programing to people. Greenwood, Lindsay, King and Loewen (2017) provide a framework of how the front line workers can practice the elements of cultural safety, to provide a more positive service to the client or consumer, this is done when the “service providers engage in a process of reflection on their own cultural identity and recognize how cultural and social positions impact their relationships with clients from different backgrounds” (p. 13). Greenwood et al. (2017) also outline the definition of culture to be more inclusive of factors, “Culture is defined broadly to include not just ethnicity, language, or customs but also age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, class, religion, and spirituality” (p.13). When taking into

consider the presence of cultural safety, there is a clear importance of including the elders/knowledge keepers in the planning and delivery of programs that incorporate traditional teachings. Organizations like SKHC provide a space where First Nations people looking for reflection of their identity in an organization, can be seen in the services as well as in the staff that hosts them.

Without the elders, teachings and ceremonies, this would have just been a research project about men sewing a shirt; with the inclusion of Elders and all that they had to offer, this simple garment became a sacred item, this shirt now is a piece of regalia, it tells a story, offers protection and give a glimpse into the complexities of First Nations Culture. Cultural safety and even Grandfather Teachings were at the core of this project from beginning to end. The creation of the Ribbon Shirt was most meaningful when the teachings were received. Some of these were shared by the traditional coordinator with the participants during the introduction session where all the men met for the first time. It is with great respect that the teachings are included in this thesis.

Teachings about the Ribbon Shirt

During the first session of this ribbon shirt making workshop, the traditional coordinator presented an introduction, this included the time frame for the project as well as some teaching about the origin of the ribbon shirt. This was a way to set the purpose for this workshop and to introduce the process that the men would be going through. Speaking about some of his knowledge gave the men a point of reference, as well as an opportunity for them to ask questions and share what the man may also know with the group. The traditional coordinator described the origins of the Ribbon Shirt:

The Ribbon Shirt has many origins. It's sort of blended together through different experiences that our people have had coming from the ghost shirt that was created back during the time when the buffalo had disappeared and the Sioux, the Lakota people specifically through Sitting Bull he had a vision and their people had looked at this vision that was brought to him where the buffalo would come back ... the original ghost shirts themselves were more buckskin and more earthy colors and the things that were hung on it were like shells and different items that would protect the individual who wore it (Traditional Coordinator Perry).

The Ribbon Shirt underwent years of modification to its current form and is a spiritual representation to the individual and community. The coloured ribbons that adorn the shirt are also part of the story. There is a link here to historical identity that is carried into today where the value is felt in knowing the historical connections. One of the Elders spoke about the Ribbon Shirt in terms of energy flow, prayer ties, and blood knowledge:

They [ribbons] flow with the energy that it's like a prayer tie ... you are wearing your prayer ties and you are wearing the colors that are you that you were gifted with ... we bring that blood knowledge through to use what we have today to do that, same thing at a different time (Elder Gloria).

This speaks to long held traditions that have been passed on through the generations in a good way. Ribbon and ribbon colour both play a part in the shirt's purpose. The ribbon color is the spirit and the ancestor's representation on the shirt signifies what is working with you to do the healing. The ribbons that hang are like an aura of protection and concurrently a connection to mother earth; Shkagamik-Kwe, a connection between the natural and spiritual world.

One Helper spoke about being a First Nations man who did not grow up with the teachings:

I didn't grow up with those teachings, but when Gloria and I got married at that time I had an extended family daughter who made me a Ribbon Shirt and I had another grandmother help me with the colors and putting them on to my shirt. So, I had a white, all white, shirt and then we put the seven colors of the rainbow, which are my colors, and there were just ribbons that were attached to my shirt (Helper Ron).

Acknowledging the Colours

One Elder spoke about acknowledging and respecting the four major colours:

There is so many different teachings and I have received a few from different Elders and for myself when I first started I had four major colors, four colors and each one of those colors represented a direction, east, south, west and north. So, there are different teachings around that, so the ones that hang down also those are, it's like your aura around you and that's a protection around you, that's like an invisible wall built up around you (Elder Rodney).

Another Elder described what the colours mean for her:

Colors for me from my understanding and all I have come to know and have been taught in my life is that, the colors have a lot to do with your spiritual, your mental, your emotional, your physical being. Each one of those colors they help you with each one of those places in your wellness, in your identity (Elder Gloria).

The elder spoke about the colors as being part of your identity, and that they work with you like tools in your whole wellness. The four colours, red, yellow, black, and white represent the nations of people and connectedness. Wearing one's colors help to heal on spiritual, mental, emotional or physical levels.

One Helper spoke about the importance of the colours to him:

When I was given those colors, I was looking at what do the colours of the rainbow mean and looking at why I have got rainbow colours ... I am still working on that; that what do they really signify, listening to different teachings about colours depending where I go and sit. If I look at some of the colors that I have heard about is that there are many colours inside the colour (Helper Ron).

The colours may signify something very different to each individual, that how the colours that you have been gifted with my work specifically for you in your own individual wellness.

The teaching may vary from elder to elder, but there is a connection to the importance of color.

Continuation of Learning

For the men that participated in this workshop these teachings of the colors and the Ribbon Shirt are invitations to continue to seek out the guidance of Elders. This new knowledge that these men were receiving is for them to build on and to share with others. The Elders speak about how this is just the beginning for many men. One of the Elder encouraged participants to go back to their families to start these conversations:

People come to me and look for clans and I can find their clans, some of them they need to go back to their community and they need to ask those questions in their community ... Go to your uncles, and aunties and ask, maybe one of them know what your clan is, maybe your grandparents might know or somebody in the community might know (Elder Rodney).

There are deeper reasons to the act of making the Ribbon Shirts. One Elder spoke about participants needing to understand who they are as Anishinaabe people:

The self-esteem, you know everything that our children are lacking, or youth are lacking this teen age, there are people had been brainwashed to believe it everything we do is bad and we

are no good for nothing and stuff and we don't have anything to offer. When they wear these shirts or when they go to different gatherings even in our regalia's when we dance you know people comment constantly how beautiful that is and how beautiful our culture is (Elder Rodney).

Benefit of Teachings

Elders, Helpers, and Traditional Coordinators spoke about the importance of receiving the teachings in terms of participants' identity, knowing who they are, and the importance of men having a sense of pride and belonging. One Elder shared that "the benefit ... is ... knowing of our identity ... our colors and our regalia and you know part of our culture we wear that it's a strong sense of our identity." When asked about why they did this work, they described feeling connected to family, community, nature, and creation. One Traditional Coordinator explained:

I do it particularly because I see many of my brothers, the other men around me, lost sometimes. Sometimes they are looking for something and I might be able to help them find what they are looking for in terms of as a man ... there is not a lot of men's teachings ... this adds to that bounty of teachings that know are there, it's just we got to find them.

(Traditional Coordinator Perry)

Sharing the Teachings

This culture has something beautiful to offer. The teaching of the Ribbon Shirt is of protection and connection to the ancestors. This teaching now belongs to the participants and now they will share this teaching with their family and friends. One Elder noted:

Wearing those shirts would provide an understanding that our ancestors are with them when they wear these shirts ... understanding too that there is power within those colors because they are protections for us and they are going to be protection for their children to come ... it will be like that till time immemorial ... they are going to share those for the rest of their

lives, they would probably share with their friends and then their friends are sharing that, and hopefully their friends are going to end up making these things do at some point (Elder Rodney).

This same Elder explained how the teachings relate to a rite of passage:

We can start from the rite of passage where a young boy leaves behind that childhood stage and moves into the youth stage or young adult stage ... the Ribbon Shirt ... plays a significant role also with helping the individual understand that they have roles and duties as a young man within the community and within their families (Elder Rodney).

Rites of passage that a young man may not have received in his youth can still be learned. As a man ages the colours will do their work to guide the participants. To have teachings that go along with making such a garment makes it more meaningful to understand why and to when he is to wear his shirt. With the understanding that these colors will be passed down and shared in the family until the time comes where an individual will be out on their own and will be gifted with new colors to help guide him and to share with his children.

Summary

This chapter included the themes that emerged from the interviews with the Elders, Helpers, and Traditional Coordinator. The quotes share their humility and how each of them is drawn to their work. Ribbon shirt, colours, continuation of learning, benefits of teachings and sharing the teachings are a few key highlights to the delivery of this workshop. Having an authentic lived experience in receiving cultural teachings and to participate in ceremony with the guidance of an Elder is what made the experience for these men that created their ribbon shirt a unique experience.

CHAPTER 7 – DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

This final chapter centres on the benefits and impacts of participating in the ribbon short making workshop for the men. Included here are the implications to the social work practice, limitations of research, and future research that may be beneficial. In closing this chapter, my personal reflections as a researcher are included.

This research included two Ojibway men (Jack and Vince) and one Metis man (Marc). The sessions started out with three strangers and finished with a large group of friends, family, and community. This research explored the involvement of men participating in a culturally focused workshop; using phenomenological methodology for this research allowed for the essence of the lived experience, benefits, and impacts of their participation, in this ribbon shirt making workshop and photovoice exhibit. The interviews with Elders, Helpers, and Traditional Coordinator, along with the photo voice exhibit and ceremonies, gave a perspective to how organizations can assist individuals in making connections to culturally safe programs and services. What the men shared highlighted the importance of having access to traditional teachings, Elders, and resources to complete the project. Men, in an urban setting, shared the importance of having a culturally safe and accepting place to strengthen their knowledge about cultural teachings and share their gifts. The creation of the ribbon shirt was the purpose of the workshop, but there were additional benefits like the opportunity to discover Spirit name, colours, and clan can strengthen identity and gain new teachings that helped continue to build on each mans sacred bundle.

Research Questions

The following sections will explore the research questions. The main question “What are the experiences of urban, First Nations, and Metis men who participate in the making of a

traditional Ribbon Shirt” is explored through two sub-questions: “What the benefits of participating in this process” and “What impact has participating in this program had on their life?” The elements that came out of this experience were the spiritual and personal growth of each man having more pride in his identity and feeling more connected to the community, family, and self.

What are the Benefits of Participating in this Process?

The research findings demonstrated how the making of a ribbon shirt, accessing Elders, participating in ceremonies, and participating in a program in a culturally safe environment were beneficial to these men. The benefit of the ribbon shirt is tangible; the ability to physically touch it and share it with others. Access to the Elders and participating in the photovoice exhibit are benefits that are unique to this workshop but can be closely duplicated for those who choose to recreate this experience.

Shirt and Personal Sacred Bundle

The first of the obvious benefits is the Ribbon Shirt; the shirt being a visual representation of the teachings, this shirt and the teaching about the shirt will become part of their personal sacred bundle. The creation of the Ribbon Shirt had a profound effect on the participants. Each man spoke to a reconnection to who they are as men and their responsibilities to self, family, and community. Wearing their shirts was honourable to the men and represented part of their identity through the colours, imagery, and clans represented on the shirt. This speaks to the connections the men felt towards their shirts and limiting sadness or negativity near it. The shirt and design are a visual representation of the teachings and identity that is unique to each man. Zedeno (2008) spoke about how items in a personal bundle can be used for spiritual and physical protection; items can be as varied as reminders of a personal event, for prayer, as well

as special gifts, pipe, song, rattle and clothing. The men in this project spoke about how the shirt is identification for them and how they felt protected when they are wearing their ribbon shirts. Sacred items, according to Zedeno (2008), are for channeling cosmic power. This addition to their bundle is a way for them to have a connection to their identity as well as something bigger than themselves. There is also the connection with the flowing ribbons and space around them.

Access to the Elders

The second benefit is the teaching about traditional men's roles, responsibilities, and the stories from the Elders. Having access to Elders and traditional teachings was at the core of this workshop. The findings highlight the importance of having the Elders present. Hearing and sharing in the knowledge of and teachings of the ancestral ways and how First Nations civilizations used teachings to guide individuals, families, and communities to be organized and healthy guided the men to participate in their family and community.

Despite the male focus of this workshop there was always female representation or voice within each activity, teaching, lesson, or story. All sessions with the Elders referred to men and women inclusively. Historically, man and woman had roles and responsibilities to each other along with shared tasks in both ceremony as well as family and community responsibility (Alfred, 1999; Duran, 1995; Kirmayer, 2009; McKegney, 2014). These traditional ways and responsibilities of being in relationship have been weakened with the colonization of Indigenous peoples. Within the project with women were acknowledged to be there for support as they have been in ceremony historically. Duran (1995) highlights, "a clear example of the support of the women for the warriors takes place in the Sun Dance ceremony. The women literally stand behind the men to help them undertake the spiritual renewal (rebirth) of the community (P.38). By adding cultural teachings and understanding to their bundles; be it a teaching, story, colours,

spirit helper, or new friendship, these spoke to the personal benefits that have impacted their lives. Each man looked inward to see his personal accomplishment with humility. Each man spoke about struggles they had as young men, these involved struggles with addiction, homelessness, sexual abuse, loss of culture, or loss of identity, and strained relationships. Talking with the Elders and hearing what they have to share is where the healing and growth are taking place.

Access to Culturally Safe Programing

Being in a culturally safe place to express their beliefs, spirituality, and participate in ceremony without racism was also seen and heard during this project. With the impacts of colonization, residential school, and the Sixties Scoop and all the social issues that First Nations people have faced for decades it is important for organizations to make some conscious decisions when providing services while working with First Nations and Metis peoples. Menzies (2008) and Kirmayer et al. (2009) spoke about the effect of intergenerational trauma that has become normalized amongst First Nations peoples that within an urban setting Indigenous people often experience feeling unsafe with the interpersonal, structural / institutional, or systemic systems. Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre has provided a safe place for these men to be comfortable and expressive in their identity.

A report released by the Health Council of Canada (HCC) (2012) states that the “negative stereotypes about Aboriginal people are deeply rooted in Canadian society, and much of what Aboriginal people experience in the health care system is an extension of this systemic racism” (p. 8). The HCC (2012) highlights how many First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people do not like to utilize the mainstream health care system because they have had experiences being treated with disrespect, judged, overlooked, stereotyped, racialized, or minimized.

Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre's main purpose is to create and deliver services, workshops, and presentations that will prevent ill health, treat illness, and provide ongoing support and aftercare. Services are offered in a culturally safe way that welcomes, accepts, and represents all Aboriginal peoples, utilizing an approach that combines Western and Traditional practices. The Ribbon Shirt Making work shop is one example of how SKHC cultivates a healthy environment. Culturally safe and competent is defined by the HHC (2012) as:

a health care environment that is free of racism and stereotypes, where Aboriginal people are treated with empathy, dignity, and respect . . . Cultural safety occurs when Aboriginal people feel they can trust their health care providers as a result of these culturally competent efforts (p. 5).

The participants spoke to how their experiences in this workshop made them feel culturally safe, that they have a voice, and that healing took place. After years of searching for support from other organizations, they have found that within an Aboriginal health center that they feel that they are being heard and seen, that their needs are being met instead of challenged. One participant spoke about SKHC answering his call for help, that when he asked for more services for men, SKHC started to offer programs specific for men, a men's healing circle, men's conference and a workshop for men who have been sexually assaulted as children that incorporated teachings and ceremony. The also men prioritized their health and spoke to the healing that they are experiencing as a positive move to repair some of the historical issues faced by First Nations and Metis men in their health care journey. Within the responses there is little division between physical, emotional, spiritual, or mental health; the men spoke about a holistic healing.

The Metis participant shared a different perspective that often is not heard in the community. The Metis man spoke of feeling outside of groups, not only of mainstream society but the First Nations community also. These feelings speak to the separation of First Nation peoples by name, but it can both discriminate and cause division among the nations. MacDougall (2017) shares how the Metis people have experienced colonialism in a different way that the same outcomes for poor health, poverty, and lack of educational attainment are shared. There is also a lack of longitudinal health data and census information about Metis people. With the paucity of information, more statistical knowledge and health research is needed to develop programs. Understanding the history of Metis peoples is an important part of understanding the effects of colonization in this country. This research does not go into the histories of this specific nation but is noted here as we work towards honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2012) recommendations, specifically #57 under the section for Professional Development and Training for Public Servants which states:

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism (p. 7)

This work may take years to integrate into the education of Canadian professionals and public servants. However, we need to understand where we have come from to make good decisions as we move forward as co-operative nations of peoples living on this land.

What Impact has Participating in this Program had on their Life?

The participants spoke about the importance of gathering together in a healthy environment to accomplish something that was healing. This was followed by how the men were impacted by actually participating in the Traditional ceremonial elements woven throughout this workshop. This section also included how the men felt a stronger connection to themselves and the community as they created the ribbon shirt and participated in the photovoice exhibit and ceremony. The culmination of this study also showed the positive ongoing impacts of having access to Elders and additional programs within the health center. The men talked about connecting with these teachings at any time in life, whether as a young child or adult. The men embraced new teachings, so they could incorporate them into their personal life or pass them onto others. As the Elders shared how rites of passage help guide a young man, these older men showed how learning new teachings was still appreciated and could be added to their sacred bundle. During this workshop the participants' self-esteem improved and they began to focus on living a healthier, more balanced life.

The impact of participating spoke to the transformation and changes in the essence of the man. What has changed in these men's lives? Jack had the confidence to get up in front of a group of people to share from the heart. Wearing his shirt gave him a new courage; he felt protected and safe to speak in this group of people. This is something he would never have done in the past. Adding teachings, ceremonies, and items to their sacred bundle is now something that the men can carry and pass on. This strengthens a sense of self and helps facilitate an introduction to community. This also includes feeling like the men can come back to SKHC, knowing they will be welcome, and feeling culturally safe.

Gathering for Health and Positive Growth

There was a benefit when the participants sat together and sewed their shirts; topics were opened, explored, and then neatly put away again, this was much like a sharing circle for these men. Hart (2002) shared his experiences in sharing circles and shared the importance of each participant have a chance to share or not share. "... it is suggested that a basic rule of sharing circle is the "the group sits in a circle and each person get a change to say whatever is on their mind without being criticized or judged by others. (p.67)

Having the opportunity to speak and be heard by other men and how this was a very beneficial process that fostered confidence and assurance between the men. As they were sewing or having some lunch, they shared their stories, sometimes triggered by a recent teaching or a situation faced by a participant. The time and space gave the men an opportunity to speak about issues they may not normally discuss in their day to day. Topics included dreams and their meaning, other crafts they had completed, teachings from sweats, fasts, or ceremonies they participated in school, treatment programs, or other gatherings. The workshop allowed the men a place to sit and share with each other in a positive way which is contrary to historical policies where it was illegal for First Nations people to gather in groups. In this study, men gathered with men, to share experiences, and to talk with out the interruption or distraction from women or children. A comradery formed that was needed by these men. This group for men allowed for the focus to be on them, to ask questions and share answers without judgment. The workshop exemplified the benefits of gathering together for a purpose that was healthy and positive.

Importance of Ceremony

Participating in ceremony made this workshop more meaningful. Being able to practice traditional ways that included the community and families built a connection to community for these men. Wearing their shirt in ceremony and being seen in a good way by all who attended

made the men feel proud. The Photovoice exhibit played three important functions of the workshop. First, it displayed the process of the men making the shirts and allowed the community an opportunity to witness what they accomplished. Second, the ceremony allowed the men opportunity to wear their shirts. Third, for the men and the community, it was a sacred event that would have been illegal sixty years ago. With Eagle feather in hand, each began by introducing himself using both his Spirit and English name. Marc spoke about being honored to be surrounded and supported by so many people. He shared about the teachings he received and how he incorporated them into his shirt. He spoke briefly about his recovery through addictions and childhood sexual abuse and the lack of support he had along the way. He spoke about how the teachings helped him get to that evening. He thanked everyone who helped him on his journey and acknowledged that it was the Shkagamik-Kwe health center that listened to him when he asked for more programming specifically for men's healing. He spoke about being heard and given the tools to help him as he continues in his healing journey.

Each man had a unique experience during the photovoice. Marc spoke about being very emotional as to being given a stage to share some of the struggles that he was having and to talk about how the process that he went through with making this shirt. Being included within the First Nations community and to be recognized as an equal was important to the Metis man. To share what he was adding to his bundle with friends and the community was a new experience. This Metis man, who struggled with his identity as a youth, stood up in front of his community with a sense of pride. He introduced himself as fire keeper and a helper, shared his colors, his culture, and his pride as a healthy, Metis man. Putting his sash on was a proud moment. It was like presenting a piece of his identity that he does not often wear outside of Metis gatherings.

Jack also introduced himself, spirit name, and clan. He spoke about a past where teachings were missing and that making this shirt had taught him things. He spoke about how his patience was tried as he worked through the sewing of his shirt. He spoke about being grateful for having this opportunity to be reminded of some old teachings and to be gifted with some new teachings. The Ojibway man shared an interaction he had with one of the other community members at the photovoice exhibit. With the positivity around making this shirt and the changes Jack made in his life, he could change how he felt about an old acquaintance and introduce himself through hand shake as someone different and more mature. This hand shake was the old changing into the new. He spoke of no longer identifying as a drunk; he is a man with more responsibility to his family and something positive to share. This ceremony gave the men opportunity to share. Marc spoke about how he offered tobacco and talked with the Elder and received his colour through a ceremony that was conducted for him. Jack shared about choosing the four direction colours and the purpose of adding those to his shirt. This showed how there is no one way to create a Ribbon Shirt. Though these two shirts shared four colours in common, they each arrived at this choice differently. It was also a healing process for the men who noted that having opportunities like this when they were younger may have changed some of their life choices. They spoke during this ceremony about how they will share these teachings with family members or pass on this Ribbon Shirt with the teaching to support someone in their life that needed it more than him. Being part of this group has been inspiring, that having spent time together and being in ceremony, there is a shift in the attitude about wearing this shirt in a good way. These events that the men speak about are not done in isolation, and to put on the shirt instantly represents you and the teachings you carry. The opportunity to stand up and be seen and heard as First Nations and Metis men is vital.

Connection to Self

Each man had his story that made him unique and added to his experience. The teachings about the shirt in addition to making the shirt, allows that story to be told. Everyone may hear the same story, but each man walked away with a different understanding. Each man has a complex life; each story filled with love, hurt, victories, and losses. No two stories are the same but are often held together by common threads of culture, traditions, teachings, grief, and loss. Like warriors that have been to battle, they share the story that helped them survive what they have been through; each man acknowledging a personal strength.

There was a deeper connection to self as they reflected on what their colours meant to them. This understanding was a core teaching as knowing your spirit name, clan, and colours contribute to who you are and your purpose (McGaa 1990; Morrisseau 1998; Hart, 2002). The participants spoke about being creative and finding inspiration and to think of ways that they could embellish these garments that would be an introduction to other people without words. During the interview the men spoke about how good they felt to share their finished shirts, their sewing, and creativity with the people who attended the ceremony. Additional impacts that were shared by the men about participating in the program included being able to share their identity in an open, welcoming environment. This involved maintaining mental and physical health with traditional teachings and the important part that they play within their families and communities.

Connection to Community

Family, friends, and the wider community attended the Photovoice Exhibit and posed questions of the men about their experience. For some, exposure to this exhibit was a new experience. Many people commented they would like to discover their own colours or create a Ribbon Shirt for themselves. A feeling of being connected to each other and the community

came out in the experiences throughout the workshop and the photovoice. The men shared about their personal lives and some experiences that they had while in ceremony and when they gathered together, this also included them sharing about the wellness and balance they felt by participating in ceremony. Struthers (2005) spoke about the value of having Indigenous people seek out their traditional way of health and healing:

These disparities may be diminished by encouraging Indigenous people who believe in their Indigenous life ways to seek health care in this manner, through advising Indigenous people to attend traditional healing ceremonies, and by referring them to Indigenous healers. In the safety of a familiar cultural context for healing, the Native person may experience the wholeness that allows for the fullest expression of healing (p. 86).

The time that the men spent together was a safe space; the shared activity of creating this Ribbon Shirt provided an opportunity to talk and to form connections. This was like a brotherhood, having shared in this activity allowed for the conversation to be safe, positive, and be completed in a creative frame of mind. The men spoke about other cultural activities that they had participated in and spoke of future ceremonies they would like to attend. Having these conversations appeared to validate the past and future experiences. Feelings of safety and trust were created over time as the weeks progressed. This also allowed the conversations to go deeper, to a spiritual level, to conversations that were about friends, family, and the personal elements of their lives.

Observing these interactions, you could see the trust that these men were developing as friends. The men that participated all had a creativity that they could quickly access. When it was time to sketch a design, men were quick to pick symbols to show pieces of their identity, as if they knew exactly where to start. The wolf, floral design, and infinity symbol were discussed.

Each man shared stories about missing being creative in their day to day. The workshop became a place where men could share skills and talents which may be frowned upon in mainstream male groups.

Connection to Culture

Thinking about the effects of colonization that Indigenous people have and continue to endure since contact, there are many forced policies with the intent to assimilate the nations of Indigenous peoples of North America. Numerous authors have highlighted how the Canadian policy of Indigenous assimilation was put into action by creating legislation that designed and forced non-Indigenous educational systems, social policies, and economic developments on Indigenous Peoples to extinguish Indigenous rights, culture, and infrastructure (Hart 2002; Menzies, 2009; Sinclair 2007, 2017).

Legislation, regulation, services, and programs developed by the policy of forced assimilation were embedded within the entire political, social, educational, and economic infrastructure of Canada (Alfred 1999; Kirmayer et al. 2009; Nebelkopf, 2004). These policies of forced assimilation failed to completely remove Aboriginal Peoples from their lands and left them with the traditional foundation of their culture. MacDonald and Steenbeek (2005) discussed how all aspects of Aboriginal health and lifestyles, traditional roles, culture, socio-economics, and access to services were disrupted as a result of colonization and assimilation practices.

First Nations original creation stories are shared with First Nations peoples to help understand, guide decisions, and create a life map to follow. Alfred (1999) writes “the only way we can survive to recover our strength, our wisdom, and our solidarity is by honoring and revitalizing the core of our traditional teachings” (p. xii). Birth, life, and death stories help guide peoples’ ability to live with others, like the Bible stories, Ten Commandments, hymns, and

scripture passages that help the colonizers make decision in their ways of life. This same understanding can be applied to the creation stories, song, dances, and ceremonies of First Nations and Metis peoples. These help Indigenous peoples of North America make connections to the land and environments here in this part of the world. The men spoke about being grateful for having access to the Elders that carry these teachings, being introduced to Elders also added new people to their community. This spoke to the importance of having the guidance of the Elders; having an authentic experience was significant.

Having this relationship is an invitation to return anytime to continue the work. Having people that you can share your story with and receive guidance on your questions is part of the learning; like having connections to extended clan family, one that is healthy and supportive. The men liked that the Health Centre is a place in the urban setting where First Nations and Metis people that reside and work in the cities still have access to traditional teachings. They now can integrate new teachings and be reminded to utilize already understood teaching and ceremonies, these aspects made the participants feel more connected to self and community.

Access to Elders and Teachings

The Elders shared their knowledge with the participants and the wisdom that they have gained along their journey. The men respected the shared teachings about traditional roles of men, the use of Ribbon Shirts, and the elements that go into the construction of them. Respect was shown in the sessions where the Elders shared personal experiences and gave teaching about the Ribbon Shirts, colors, clans, and ceremonies. These men listened with quiet stillness that was at times very serious and other times where laughter was there to break the intensity of the discussion. In First Nation, Inuit, and Metis cultures, like many others from other Indigenous cultures, there is a respect for the lived experience. Each of the participants reflected on the importance of having healthy Elders, with good teachings, and that the Elders had the

recognition from their communities to be introduced as an Elder. Being an elderly person does not automatically make an Elder. Elders share gifts to help the community through ceremony, medicine, guidance, or song. The Elders gave meaning to this workshop on a more spiritual level. The Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (1996) noted:

Elders in Aboriginal communities are those recognized and respected for knowing, living and teaching the traditional knowledge. They see the world through the eyes of the ancestors and interpret the contemporary world through lessons passed down through generations. Their wisdom is transferred to young people who seek their teachings. The elders are a living bridge between the past and the present. They also provide a vision for the future, a vision grounded in tradition and informed by the experience of living on the land, safeguarding and disseminating knowledge gained over centuries (p. 7).

Indigenous people are cautious as to whom they involve in there into their journey to wellness, so feeling comfortable to ask questions was paramount to ensure that the teachings were sound. Intergenerational trauma and colonization is still felt today and trauma, at times, makes people uneasy, or trigger past trauma (Duran 1995; Nebelkopf, 2004). Therefore, having access to the Elders in a health centre like SKHC is so vital, that vetted Elders can do the work that they need to do, and people can come and sit in ceremony with them and trust the interaction.

Access to Programs and Workshops

The data analysis showed how it was the availability of this program, supplies, and teachings that brought these men together. Without this program they may have never made their own shirt or been in attendance to these teachings and ceremony. There have been many issues that have made providing such programs very difficult. As stated in the literature review section

colonization, intergenerational trauma, government policy, funding, and racism have all played a part in the slow growth and services that are being offered in the areas of mental health (Hart, 2002; Mawhiney & Nabigon, 2011; Menzies 2008, 2009; Nabigon & Wenger-Nabigon, 2012). Connection to culture is such an integral part to the health of First Nations and Metis people; loss of land, language and ways of life has weakened the identity of people (Baskin, 2011; Duran, 2006; Gone, 2013; Hart, 2002; McCabe, 2007; Menzies, 2008; Nabigon & Wagner-Nabigon, 2012; Stewart, 2008). Having heard the common themes emerge from the men and Elders speak to the benefits of participating in this program and gives voice to the value of providing programing that is specific to the needs of individuals and groups.

Implications for Social Work

For the practice of social work, the experiences that have been shared here will broaden the understanding of services that First Nations and Metis men are looking for in the area of support and a more specific understanding of the lived experiences of this marginalized population in order to inform policy development and improve programs and services. Members of marginalized populations, such as these three men and five of the Elders and helpers, all have been given a voice when they have the opportunity to participate in research. Clinicians, agencies, and therapists working with this population will understand better the experiences of urban First Nations and Metis and understand the effects of intergenerational trauma that stemmed from the Residential schools and the Sixties Scoop. This may lead to more effective advocates for a population that has a difficult time advocating for themselves.

Participating in this project benefits First Nations and Metis men who are on their journey to wellness. Findings from this research will benefit social work organizations that may be looking for alternative ways to engage First Nation and Metis men in traditional forms of

healing. This will also be beneficial for agencies to advocate for increased funding to host men's programming in treatment and counselling services. The final implication is the importance of First Nations and Metis peoples accessing services in a culturally safe place, having the benefits of an organization such as SKHC that primarily employs people with Indigenous ancestry, and is guided in the cultural teaching in balance with mainstream programming. This balance works well for the urban population, as they gain and maintain good balance spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically.

Limitations

One limitation to this study was the participants were unique to this geographical location and teachings were specific to the individual Elders; not all elders will have the exact same teachings. The teachings may be similar, but the way the knowledge has been passed on and shared may vary. This data was also specific to the making of the Ribbon Shirt and the resources provided by SKHC. The outcomes may have differed with another created item. Another limitation of this study is the sample size. As such, the findings cannot be generalized to all First Nations and Metis men. The sample also did not include Inuit men. In addition, this study looked primarily at the experience of men who have chosen to participate in the programming at SKHC located in the Greater City of Sudbury. The urban setting of this study may preclude the voices of men in rural locations.

Implications for Future Research

The intent of the research was to collect qualitative information on how First Nations and Metis men experienced a Ribbon Making Workshop at Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre. There were no participant that self-identified as Inuit so these finding are reflective on the participant and providers that were involved. When considering the sample size and scope of the research

questions, the purpose of the research was met. Further research on the topic could include a larger sample size, other specific First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples and having the workshop conducted in the language of that region. Expanding this research will provide more data on the value of language, culture, and traditions. Increasing the sampling size and changing the geographic area of data collection would be the next logical step to the ongoing understanding of importance of providing culturally specific programming for varied groups of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit men, in urban, rural and remote locations.

Offering programs like this can be the connection to a community away from someone's home community. Future research is needed to show the benefits of having culturally focused workshops and access to Elders; to show the shift in wellness for an individual or family. This research will ensure that future funding and program development will include culturally appropriate ways.

Personal Reflection

As the match strikes the side of the box, the flame flickers to life, to light the sacred medicines that have been purposely placed in a smudge bowl. I, as a First Nations woman, looked for guidance from my helpers and from the ancestors to guide this research in a good way. I had some apprehension about how to write about such a personal experience of the men without disrupting the sacredness of the teachings and ceremony. However, with the good guidance of the Elders the experience that these men had showed in the analyses was reflected well in participants' perspectives.

This research showed how growth and connection to cultural teachings and practitioners can change and improve First Nations and Metis men's balance. Having access to programs and people such as Elders can lessen the effects of intergenerational trauma, be it residential school,

Indian hospitals, Sixties Scoop, poverty, racism, isolation, relocation, adoption, addictions, violence, or loss of culture. Conversely, those individuals that are healthy and are in good balance are also looking to learn, build, and share their identity and maintain mental health. These programs are equally important to those individuals who are accessing services for personal growth or balance.

Concluding Thoughts

The findings in this research begin to fill a gap in the literature that features the experiences of First Nations and Metis men participating in a culturally focused program. These themes showed how personal growth, connections, new understanding, access to Elders, teachings about colours, new and old teachings, connections to spirit, benefits of being creative, having a voice, being part of a community, and having balance and identity all play a part in strengthening the distinctiveness of First Nations, Metis and Inuit men.

The research highlighted that these men already carried some good teachings but that there is always a need to learn more. The traditional activities studied in this research were utilized as an avenue to gain some healing from the impact of colonization and assimilation, intergenerational trauma, individual and historical traumas, and loss of culture and identity.

The findings show that benefits of the development of future programs, workshops and ceremonies for First Nations men and the importance of providing support to men as they receive teachings from Elders. This research saw men create a Ribbon Shirt that has significant cultural meaning to promote and strengthen men's connection to their cultural identity and traditional knowledge. The essence of the men's experience highlighted the need to gather as men, to sit in ceremony with Elders, refresh already acquired teachings and introduce new ones. The completion of a Ribbon Shirt allowed each man to see a tangible object that he could own

and show his friends, family, and community. This gave the men, Elders, and helpers a voice to share the benefits of participating in this workshop; this showed how each person was interconnected to the project during different stages of the program.

During the project, there was already discussion as to when the next workshop will be hosted and improvements that could be made. Access to Elders and teachings was one area that came up in all participants' conversations. It was important that the Elders be involved, that they be individuals that are recognized as Elders from the community, that the teachings that they share are authentic and accurate. There was discussion as to the benefits of having the Elders be there to give teachings about the colours, the clans, the stories, and the customs of the shirt. The participants as well as the Elders echoed each other in that having the teachings along with the garment, made it a more authentic experience that just making a shirt or just receiving a teaching about the shirt individually.

Reading (2009) outlined how intergenerational trauma and colonization has been linked to many of the illnesses of First Nations and Metis people. Appropriate working partnership is the goal of providing balanced effective programming to ensure the health and well-being of individuals. The culmination of this research highlights how the integrations of traditional practices and culturally focused workshop help individuals heal on more than one level. Emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental health needs will all benefit from the incorporation of culturally relevant programming that supports the growth of traditional knowledge in First Nations and Metis men.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

Appendix B: Information Letter / Consent Form (Participants)

Appendix C: Interview Guide (Participants)

Appendix D: Information Letter / Consent Form (Elders and Traditional Coordinator)

Appendix E: Interview Guide (Elders and Traditional Coordinator)

Appendix F: Information Letter / Consent Form (Seamstresses)

Appendix G: Listing of First Nations Mental Health Resources in Sudbury

Appendix H: Pledge of Confidentiality for Transcription

Appendix I: Letter to SKHC Board of Directors

Appendix J: Proposed Agenda for Ribbon Shirt Workshop and Photovoice Exhibit

Appendix K: Poster for Community Invite to Photovoice Exhibit

Appendix L: Photographs that were used in Photovoice Exhibit



Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

ARE YOU A MAN *of* FIRST NATIONS ANCESTRY?

Would you like to make a ribbon shirt your own, learn some teachings about men's traditional roles and participate in a Photovoice Exhibit?

I would like to invite you to participate in my research study.

My name is Angela Nahwegahbow. I am a member of the Whitefish River First Nation and a Master's of Social Work candidate studying in the School of Social Work at Laurentian University.

My research project is titled:

A Phenomenological Study Using Photovoice: Urban First Nations Men Create a Ribbon Shirt

The ribbon shirt workshop will be held at the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre by the Traditional Program. There will be a total of six sessions with each session lasting 4 hours and one final interview during the week of April 11 to April 15, 2016. Light meals will be provided.

You must be able to attend all 6 sessions:

Fridays, March 4, 11 and 18 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wednesday, March 23 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Friday, April 1 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Friday, April 8 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.



IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT:

Angela Nahwegahbow, 705-675-1596, ext. 246, or anahwegahbow@laurentian.ca





Appendix B: Letter of Information / Consent Form (Participants)
A Phenomenological Study using Photovoice:
Urban First Nations Men Create a Ribbon Shirt

Date: October 23, 2017

I have read the information letter for this study and understand its details. I understand that the purpose of this research is to study the experiences of First Nations men learning traditional teachings and creating a Ribbon Shirt.

I am aware that participating in this proposed research study will not affect my access to services at SKHC. I understand that I will attend six sessions at SKHC and respond to interview questions. I understand that I will not be asked to use my name in the interview. I acknowledge that the interview will be taped using a hand held recording device and uploaded to a portable hard drive. I understand that the interviews will then be protected through encryption and passwords and sent for transcription. I understand that the hard copies of the transcribed interviews will then be analyzed.

I understand that there are direct benefits from this study; I will have the opportunity to learn traditional teachings and create a Ribbon Shirt which I will then own. I understand that the interviews will take place at SKHC at 161 Applegrove in a private room. I acknowledge that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without penalty up until the interviews are transcribed. I also understand that some of the content from the interview and photographs may be published and used by Shkagamik-Kwe for promotion and examples for future Ribbon Shirt making workshops. I understand that I will not be personally identified in any written / or photographs publication unless I give my consent. I acknowledge receiving a list of mental health counselling services prior to participating in the study.

Participation

Will you consent to be in photos that show your face, so that you can be identified in the Photovoice and Published Study and future presentation of whole or parts of this research?

YES ☐ NO ☐

YES ☐ NO ☐ or Choose a pseudo ☐ _____

Example: First Name Only /Man #/ Male #/ alias etc. (write above)

If you would like to receive a copy of the summary or the research findings, please indicate a mailing address: _____

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time. However, once the interviews are transcribed it will not be possible to withdraw.

Confidentiality

Your name will not be linked to your responses in any way unless you have given consent. The photographs that you consent to, will be used within this research and Photovoice

Exhibit. Only the results of the analysis of the interviews will be used in the final thesis. This study has been approved by the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board.

Publication of Results

The results will be presented **Indigenous Health Conference in Toronto 2018, and be used by SKHC for future programing purposes.** If you have any questions or concerns about the research, would like an update on its status or would like a copy of the results, please contact the Principal Investigator, Angela Nahwegahbow / ae_nahwegahbow@laurentian.ca. Your confidentiality will be maintained, as you have consented to.

I understand that the interview takes about 2 hours in total to complete. I understand that hard copies of the interviews and consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet at SKHC and will be shredded in 2017. I acknowledge that Angela Nahwegahbow will use a data encryption system associated with MSOffice and Acrobat and implement the security measurements and passwords associated with these programs. I understand that the data will be stored on a portable hard drive, which will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be erased and reformatted when the study is complete. I understand that this study has been approved by the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board.

Any questions about the research and my participation have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand the information presented about the study entitled: A Phenomenological Study using Photovoice: Urban First Nations Men Create a Ribbon Shirt and agree to participate. I understand that I may contact the Research Ethics Officer, Laurentian University Research Office, telephone: 705-675-1151 ext. 2436 or toll free at 1-800-461-4030 or email ethics@laurentian.ca if I have questions about my rights as a research participant. I understand that I may also contact Ms. Nahwegahbow's supervisor, Dr. Lea Tufford at 1-855-675-1151 ext. 6717.

.....
Participant's signature

Copy1: Participant

Copy2: Researcher

Code:

.....
Date

Angela Nahwegahbow, MSW Candidate

Email Address: ae_nahwegahbow@laurentian.ca



Appendix C: Interview Guide (Participants)
Phenomenological Study using Photovoice:
Urban First Nations Men make a Ribbon Shirt

Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview. Before we start our discussion, let me make a few requests of you. First, as we discussed, I am tape recording the session so that I can refer to the discussion when I analyze the materials and write up the findings. If you do not agree to be taped, I will take notes while we speak.

Today we are going to discuss the topic of your experiences in the photovoice and Ribbon Shirt workshop. I want to know about your perceptions, opinions and experiences and I will ask questions to guide our discussion. Let's begin.

1. What led you to participate in the workshop?
 Probe: When you first heard about the study, what were you feeling or thinking at that point?
 Probe: How did you feel when you met the group that you would be working with?
 Probe: How did you feel when you first met the Elders?
 Probe: Did your expectations or sense change after this first meeting? (Introductions, consent, photovoice).
2. As you listen to the teaching about Men's traditional roles, is there anything that resonated with you?
 Probe: What can you recall about the sense that you had about these teachings, were they new information or a reminder of past teachings?
 Probe: Is there something about these teachings that changed you personally?
 Probe: Can you share if these teachings have changed your life in any way?
3. As you listened to the teachings about the Ribbon Shirt, is there anything that resonated with you?
 Probe: What did you learn about these Ribbon Shirts?
 Probe: What did you learn about the colours, that you could use?
 Probe: What designs came to mind as you began to think about creating this shirt?
4. As you constructed your shirt, can you describe what you were thinking while engaged in this type of the activity?
 Probe: What can you recall about the sense that you had as you began to choose and think about your colors and patterns.
 Probe: How did you feel as you began to cut out, sew and iron your ribbon and cloth?
 Probe: Did you experience any other emotions, memories or feelings while you were beginning to put this shirt together?
 Probe: When you first tried on your shirt, can you tell me about what you were feeling?
5. As you looked at yourself in your shirt what emotions or experiences were you having?
 Probe: As you reflect back is there any additional sensations or memories that come to mind?

Probe: Can you tell me about where you choose to wear your shirt for the first time? Can you tell me about that experience?

6. What was it like to participate in the Photovoice exhibit?

Probe: How did you feel as you reviewed the photos?

Probe: Why did you select the photos that you choose?

Probe: When you saw the final exhibit ready to be viewed by the public, how did you feel

Probe: What were your fears and expectations, if any?

Probe: What was your experience during the exhibit?

Probe: How did you feel about how the evening went?

Probe: What was your best moment of the exhibit?

7. As you reflect back over this experience of participating in the making of the Ribbon Shirt and Photovoice Exhibit, how do you feel that you have changed?

Probe: As you reflect is there anything you regret?

Probe: Are there any other comments or statements that you would like to add about participating in this Ribbon Shirt Making Workshop and Photo- Voice Exhibit?



Appendix D: Information Letter / Consent Form (Elders and Traditional Coordinator)
A Phenomenological Study using Photovoice: Urban First Nations Men
Create a Ribbon Shirt

October 23, 2017

Dear _____,

I am a Master's of Social Work candidate in the School of Social Work at Laurentian University. I am inviting you to participate in a qualitative study on First Nations men's experiences of creating a Ribbon Shirt.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to provide First Nations men the opportunity to learn traditional teachings, create a Ribbon Shirt, participate in a ceremony to wear the shirt and to participate in a photovoice project.

- Participating in this project benefits First Nations men on their journey to wellness. There is a benefit to the incorporation of culture and traditions, to help repair the feeling of being disconnected, that some First Nations men are experiencing.
- Findings from this research will benefit the organization (SKHC) to plan and introduce more specific and focused programming for men.
- This research will benefit me as a researcher/social worker in identifying the need of the participants and advocating for additional programming in the community.

Tasks to be Performed When Participating

- You will be conducting the workshop as laid out in the proposed outline and suggested time lines.
- You will assist in the preparation and implementation of the Ribbon Shirt Making Workshop and Photo-voice Exhibit. (Roles will be specific to Elder and Traditional Coordinator).
- You will offer support, teachings and guidance to all participants, co-Traditional Coordinator and Elders as needed.
- Adhere to all policies and procedure as laid out by the SKHC.
- You will participate in one interview with Angela Nahwegahbow to share your experience as an Elder or Traditional Coordinator during this research project.

Benefits and Risks

- You will have an opportunity to share your experience and contribute to the development of programing for First Nations men.
- You may find answering some the questions upsetting. A listing of mental health counselling resources will be provided to you prior to the start of the interview.

Participation

Will you consent to be in photos that show your face, so that you can be identified in the Photovoice and Published Study and future presentation of whole or parts of this research?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Do you consent to have your name so that you can be identified in the Published Study?

Do you consent to have your name so that you can be identified in the Published Study?

YES ☐ NO ☐ or Choose a pseudo ☐ _____

Example: Male Elder/Female Elder/Male Helper/ Female helper / First Name Only etc. (write above)

If you would like to receive a copy of the summary or the research findings, please indicate a mailing address: _____

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

However, once the interviews are transcribed it will not be possible to withdraw.

Confidentiality

Your name will not be linked to your responses in any way unless you have given consent. The photographs that you consent to, will be used within this research and Photovoice Exhibit. Only the results of the analysis of the interviews will be used in the final thesis. This study has been approved by the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board.

Publication of Results

The results will be presented **Indigenous Health Conference in Toronto 2018, and be used by SKHC for future programing purposes.** If you have any questions or concerns about the research, would like an update on its status or would like a copy of the results, please contact the Principal Investigator, Angela Nahwegahbow / ae_nahwegahbow@laurentain.ca. Your confidentiality will be maintained, as you have consented to.

Any questions about the research and my participation have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand the information presented about the study entitled: A Phenomenological Study using Photovoice: Urban First Nations Men Create a Ribbon Shirt and agree to participate.

I understand that I may contact the Research Ethics Officer, Laurentian University Research Office, telephone: 705-675-1151 ext. 2436 or toll free at 1-800-461-4030 or email

ethics@laurentian.ca if I have questions about my rights as a research participant. I understand that I may also contact Ms. Nahwegahbow's supervisor, Dr. Lea Tufford at 1-855-675-1151 ext. 6717.

.....
Participant's signature

Copy1: Traditional Coordinator/Elder

Copy2: Researcher

Code:

.....
Date

Angela Nahwegahbow, MSW Candidate



Appendix E: Interview Guide (Elders and Traditional Coordinator)

Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview. Before we start our discussion, let me make a few requests of you. First, as we discussed, I am tape recording the session so that I can refer to the discussion when I analyze the materials and write up the findings. If you do not agree to be taped, I will take notes while we speak.

Today we are going to discuss the topic of your experiences as an Elder / Traditional Coordinator in the photovoice and Ribbon Shirt workshop. I want to know about your perceptions, opinions and experiences and I will ask questions to guide our discussion. Let's begin.

1. What is your role/employment here at SKHC?
2. What is the value of men learning traditional roles?
3. What do you know about Ribbon Shirts?
 Probe: Where did the Ribbon Shirt originate?
 Probe: What does it signify?
 Probe: What significance does it have in ceremony?
 Probe: What do the colours mean?
 Probe: Do the ribbons signify anything?
4. Do you own a Ribbon Shirt?
 Probe: If yes, can you tell me about your shirt, how long have you had it, how did you acquire it?
 Probe: Did you make it or was it a gift. Can you talk about how you felt when received or made it.
5. What is the value of males / females having these teachings?
 Probe: Why do you share these stories/teachings?
 Probe: When do you feel that males should get these teachings?
 Probe: What is the benefit of First Nations people having and sharing these teachings?
6. Have you seen any difference in the men since as they participated in this workshop?
 Probe: What is the importance of the men having the opportunity to participate in the making/construction of this Ribbon Shirt?
 Probe: During these sessions or other occasions you have seen men wearing their Ribbon Shirt and noticed anything different in their behavior.
7. Thinking about this research contributing to men's programming.
 Probe: What do you think is going well with First Nations men programming?
 Probe: What do you feel is lacking in men's programming?
 Probe: What would you like to see change or be added to improve in the area of First Nations Men's Programming?
8. Is there anything you would like to add in this interview that we did not cover about your experience of participating with this Ribbon Shirt and Photo-voice Project.



Appendix F: Information Letter / Consent Form (Seamstress)
A Phenomenological Study using Photovoice: Urban First Nations Men
Create a Ribbon Shirt

October 2015

Dear _____,

I am a Master's of Social Work candidate in the School of Social Work at Laurentian University. I am inviting you to participate in a qualitative study on First Nations men's experiences of creating a Ribbon Shirt.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to provide First Nations men the opportunity to learn traditional teachings, create a Ribbon Shirt, participate in a ceremony to wear the shirt and to participate in a photovoice project.

- Participating in this project benefits First Nations men on their journey to wellness. There is a benefit to the incorporation of culture and traditions, to help repair the feeling of being disconnected, that some First Nations men are experiencing.
- Findings from this research will benefit the organization (SKHC) to plan and introduce more specific and focused programming for men.
- This research will benefit me as a researcher/social worker in identifying the need of the participants and advocating for additional programming in the community.

Tasks to be Performed When Participating

- You will be assisting participants as they create a Ribbon Shirts.
- Adhere to all policies and procedure as laid out by the SKHC.

Benefits and Risks

- You will have an opportunity to share your experience and contribute to the development of programing for First Nations men.
- As a courtesy a listing of mental health counselling resources will be provided to you prior to the start of the workshop. These are for you to access if needed.

Participation

Would you like to be in photos that show your face, so that you can be identified in the Photovoice and Published Study? YES ☐ NO ☐

If you would like to receive a copy of the summary or the research findings, please indicate a mailing address: _____

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time. However, once the interviews are transcribed it will not be possible to withdraw.

Confidentiality

Your name will not be linked to your responses in any way. The photographs that you consent to, will be used within this research and Photovoice Exhibit. Only the results of the analysis of the interviews will be used in the final thesis. This study has been approved by the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board.

Publication of Results

The results will be presented (SKHC –Mens Gathering Fall 2016). If you have any questions or concerns about the research, would like an update on its status or would like a copy of the results, please contact the Principal Investigator, Angela Nahwegahbow / ae_nahwegahbow@laurentian.ca. Your confidentiality will be maintained.

Any questions about the research and my participation have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand the information presented about the study entitled: A Phenomenological Study using Photovoice: Urban First Nations Men Create a Ribbon Shirt and agree to participate. I understand that I may contact the Research Ethics Officer, Laurentian University Research Office, telephone: 705-675-1151 ext. 2436 or toll free at 1-800-461-4030 or email ethics@laurentian.ca if I have questions about my rights as a research participant. I understand that I may also contact Ms. Nahwegahbow's supervisor, Dr. Lea Tufford at 1-855-675-1151 ext. 6717.

.....
Participant's signature
Copy1: Traditional Coordinator/Elder
Copy2: Researcher
Code:

.....
Date

Angela Nahwegahbow, MSW Candidate



Appendix G: Listing of First Nations Mental Health Resources in Sudbury

Dear Participant,

Discussing your experiences in this research interviews could raise personal issues for you that are stressful. If this happens for you and you would like to speak to a support person about this, here is a list of some community resources that might be of assistance to you. Alternately, you may contact me at 705-675-1596, ext. 246 and I will direct you to the appropriate community service.

Thank you again for participating!

Sincerely,

Angela Nahwegahbow, M.S.W Candidate

Community Resources

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre (Cultural Counselor) or (Elder) | 705-675-1596 |
| Medicine Lodge (Health Sciences North) (HSN) | Drop In – at H.S.N |
| Crisis Intervention Team (24 hours) | 705-675-4760 |
| Metis Association of Sudbury | 705-671-9855 |
| Sudbury Counselling Centre | 705-524-9629 |



Pledge of Confidentiality for Transcription

We Datalyst LLC, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from Angela Nahwegahbow related to her Master's Thesis study on *A Phenomenological Study using Photovoice: Urban First Nations Men Create a Ribbon Shirt*. Furthermore, I agree to hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents:

- To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Angela Nahwegahbow.
- To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.
- To return all audiotapes and study-related documents to Angela Nahwegahbow in a complete and timely manner.
- To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and / or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed): Amit Shah

Transcriber's signature: Amit Shah

Date: 06/09/16



Appendix I: Letter to Shkagamik-Kwe Board of Directors

Dear Shkagamik-Kwe Board of Directors:

My name is Angela Nahwegahbow and I am a Master's of Social Work student in the School of Social Work at Laurentian University. I am conducting a research study entitled "A Phenomenological Study using Photovoice: Urban First Nations Men Create a Ribbon Shirt". I am interested in the personal experiences of First Nations men participating in a workshop where they learn traditional knowledge, teachings and ceremony. I have attached an Information Letter for participants which gives further details about the study.

I am writing to request your assistance in my research study. I would like to recruit two of your Elders, two members of your traditional staff, two seamstresses and four male participants into a study that will include teaching and the creation of a Ribbon Shirt, wearing the shirt to a ceremony and a culminating interview about the experience. The study should be concluded by March 2016.

I would like permission to work with your traditional program to plan this study in detail and to conduct this research. I will ensure that this project is completed with the utmost respect that it deserves and will make a final presentation once my thesis is complete. If you have any further questions or require any additional information, please contact me at 705-626-9917, or by email at ae_nahwegahbow@laurentian.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.

Angela Nahwegahbow, M.S.W. Candidate



Appendix J: Proposed Agenda for Ribbon Shirt Workshop and Photovoice Exhibit

Session # 1: – Tuesday Evening (5-9pm)

Agenda – description of research, description of workshop, description of Photovoice, confidentiality and consents to participate, opening circle by Elders, measurement for shirts.

5:00 – 5:30 (Angela)

What is the purpose of this workshop, research and photovoice.

What is confidentiality (in circle and in workshop) and sign consents. Photographs and interviews.

What will the next few weeks look like, times, dates and schedules.

Agendas will be handed out.

5:30- 6:00 Supper break -

6:00 – 7:45 Workshop will be opened with a circle conducted with all participants.

Teachings about traditional men's roles, past, present, future, roles of historical influences (residential schools, 60's scoop, child welfare, institutionalization, etc.)

This circle will also include an opportunity to share experiences that the men have had both negative and positive in their life and the reason that they wish to participate in this workshop.

Teachings and / ceremony will be conduct as Elder chooses. (Ribbon Shirt, Colours, fire keeping duties, etc.)

7:45 – 8:00 Review of the next sessions. Measurement for the shirts will also be taken during this first session.

Session # 2: Tuesday (5-9 pm)

Agenda: Teachings about the Shirt, ceremony, and circle. Participants begin the design of the shirt.

5:00 – 6:00– Elders will present teachings and ceremony.

5:30- 6:00 - Supper break

6:00 – 7:45 – Seamstress will sit with each man to talk about colours and design of ribbons to be placed on shirts. Sewing will start if there is time.

7:45 – 8:00 Final words from the Elders.

Session # 3: – Monday (5-9 pm)

Agenda: Complete Ribbon Shirt, Teachings, Ceremony.

5:00 – 5:30 – Opening Circle – check in to see how everyone is doing. Answer questions and provide guidance as needed.

5:30- 6:00 – Work on completing sewing with Seamstress.

Supper break

6:00 – 7:50 – Elders have an opportunity to do another teaching here while men complete sewing as needed.

7:50 – 8:00 – Review of the next session and final words from Elders.

Session # 4: Monday (5-9 pm)

Agenda: Prepare, learn about and participate in a ceremony. Review for next week's Photovoice project.

5:00 – 7:00 – Ceremony will be conducted by the Elders).

7:00 – 7:55 Feast/ supper break

7:55 – 8:00 – Review of the next session and final words from Elders.

Session # 5: Monday (5-9 pm)

Agenda: Select photos and written narratives for photos for photovoice exhibit.

Four laptops (provided by SKHC) to be used for each participant to go through all photographs taken during the last 3 weeks.

5:00 – 6:00 – Selection of photos and creation of narratives.

6:00 – 6:30 – Supper Break

6:30 – 8:00 – Complete selection of photos and narratives for the exhibit. Final words from Elders.

Session # 6 Friday (6-8 pm)

6:00 – 6:15 - Opening greeting to the Exhibit. Brief introductions and explanation of why this Photovoice Exhibit was completed.

6:15 – 8:00 – This will be an opportunity for all those who were involved to speak with friends, family and community members to ask questions and make comments about the exhibit.

Refreshments and light snacks will be provided for all.

Appendix K: Community Invitation for Community to Photovoice Exhibit

PHOTOVOICE EXHIBIT

BUILDING OUR BUNDLE:
FIRST NATIONS MEN CREATE A RIBBON SHIRT

Saturday, April 30, 2016 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
SKHC Community Centre, 105 Elm Street

This is part of the research being completed for thesis research project
being completed by Laurentian University Masters of Social Work candidate,
Angela Nahwegahbow. (*A Phenomenological Study Using Photovoice:
Urban First Nations Men Create Ribbon Shirt*)

Over the past few weeks, three men
have taken on the task of learning about
and making a Ribbon Shirt. They have
sat with elders, and through teaching
and information received, designed a
ribbon shirt.

We would like to invite you out to see
the process they went through, and to
show you the shirt they have created.
During this exhibit you will view
pictures of the process and to read and
hear some of the journey that they have
travelled. Men will be wearing their
shirts during this exhibit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre Traditional Program, 705-675-1596 or
Angela Nahwegahbow, anahwegahbow@laurentian.ca



Shkagamik-Kwe
HEALTH CENTRE



Laurentian University
Université Laurentienne

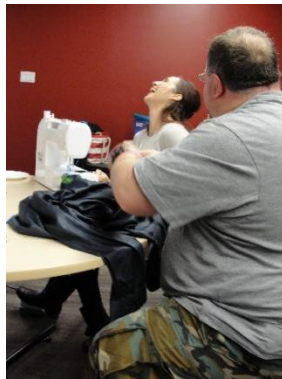
Appendix L: Photovoice Exhibit Pictures



Every
colour tells
a story.
Some
stories we
tell you,
some stories



Working together as healthy men to
create a healthy community.



We had some good laughs along the way.
The humor some days was infectious.



The sewing
machines became
an extension of
creativity, the hum
and churning of
the sewing
machines was like
a meditation.



We started with tobacco. Tobacco was offered to the elders to share their knowledge. Stories and teachings were shared to add to our understanding.



Finding the items that help tell our stories. In creating the design, we can incorporate elements and teachings and ceremony that help define us. Teachings from within our family community or tradition.



Together we spoke about and shared ideas, looked through books and began to put together individual designs.



There were moments of quiet contemplation. The conversation was positive and creative.



Pencil and paper, the designs began to take shape.



This time of work was a good time to think being more creative to think about what else could we add to our shirt.



Other peoples beautiful work was shared to show some of the techniques that could be used.



We are all weaved together as one.
P.S do not forget your Sema.



We ate good food while making our shirts. We would gather to eat, to take a break to share food together allowed us to get to know each other, to talk about our day to day lives outside of this workshop.



Thread and small tools were tricky for hand that hold hammers and wrenches.



We used many different tools. Sometimes a pocket knife can be your best tool.





It is important to make time for yourself.



Being in the center was nice to have people see what we were up to, to see how some came to see our progress over the weeks.



We shared stories about our past. We shared stories about what we went through as men.



We ironed the designs onto paper so we could iron it on to the shirts, so that we could begin to sew, this made ironing on easier so we did not have to use so many pins.



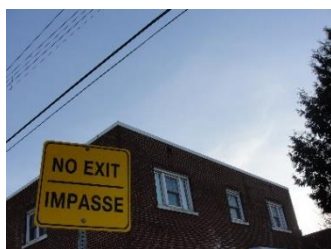
Sewing, learning a new trade.



Elders share with us teachings of the importance of having your spirit name, colours and knowing your clan.



Colours play a role in your life and how they can guide and protect you on your journey.



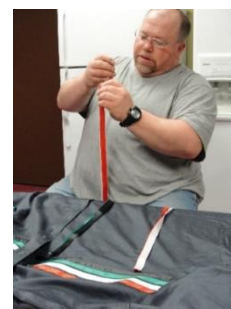
In this city we at times struggle to find our identity, we do not see it in our everyday. This city life gives us opportunities and a sense of community, be it work school or family.



Elders that shared teachings and stories shaw light to the importance of recognizing the difference we have within the nations that we come from. That we must be respectful of where people are from and honor their knowledge.



Fitting this workshop into a busy work, school schedule, shift work, job and family responsibilities was a t times a bit of a struggle. Tis this is a commitment to complete some thing to be added to my bundle.



Finding programing for men in the city was difficult. When you have gone thought treatment for trauma or abuse or addictions it is important to have after care. Finding programing where you can be comfortable, and welcome can be difficult.



We take care in the work that we did, being gentle and mindful as we worked.



Sewing on my colours. (real men sew) Very hard but humbling experience. To affirm my culture. (THE MEN ARE HERE)



Fire Keepers need to build and tend to his fire from within.



Deciding on a design. We looked for inspiration from many places. Internet, books, drawing on memories that build the story. Looking for the things that will help tell our story.



Living in the city there are many racisms that we meet head on. Some we answer to some we turn away from. Having good teachings and a place to learn some new ones are important.



Sometimes we come up against road blocks. We have to be a warrior everyday, use our teachings to make good choices and protect ourselves and our families.



Good feeling of feeding my soul.



Being guided by the seamstress when needed, tension, needles and bobbins.



Thinking of future generations, my kids, grandkiddies projects.



Ribbons, design and the colours that are chooses are individual to each man.



I let my spirit shine, to free it.